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THE PRINCETON SEMINARY BULLETIN

VOLUME XVI NUMBER 3 NEW SERIES 1995

COMMENCEMENT 1995
Maintain the Paradox

CONRAD H. MASSA

A Generous Orthodoxy

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STONE LECTURE
Dante: Poet-Theologian

PETER S. HAWKINS

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Maintain the Paradox

by CONRAD H. MASSA

The speaker at the 1995 Commencement of Princeton Theological Seminary was Conrad H. Massa, Charlotte W. Newcombe Professor of Practical Theology at the Seminary.

I AM NOW in the decade of life that gerontologists define by the category of the “young-old.” I thought I knew what that meant. It was a chronological thing—the decades after age sixty-five are the young-old, then the middle-old, and, beginning at eighty-five years, the old-old. Still, when I became sixty-five it was clear to me that the term had not so much to do with chronology as it had to do with psychology. Being “young-old” means living another of life’s paradoxes, for “young-old” means I am still young enough to want to do what I am old enough to know I shouldn’t!

Charles Handy, a professor at the London Business School and a commentator on the BBC, in his recent book *The Age of Paradox* writes,

I used to think that paradoxes were the visible signs of an imperfect world, a world which would, one day, be better understood and better organized. There had to be one right way to bring up children, I thought. There should be no reason for some people to starve while others gorge. Freedom need not mean license, violence, or even war. Riches for some do not necessarily imply poverty for others. . . . eventually there would be what scientists call “A Theory of Everything,” and, as Stephen Hawking, the Cambridge physicist, put it, probably ironically, we would then know the mind of God. . . .

I no longer believe in A Theory of Everything. . . . Paradox I now see to be inevitable, endemic, and perpetual. . . . We can, and should, reduce the starkness of some of the contradictions, minimize the inconsistencies, understand the puzzles . . . but we cannot make them disappear, or solve them completely, or escape from them. . . .

. . . As I grew older, I realized that what I had been told was God’s great gift to mankind—choice—turned out to be itself a paradox because the freedom to choose implies the freedom to choose wrong, to sin. . . . Sin, original sin, therefore, is the price we pay for our humanity. There was paradox at the heart of religion.¹

We Christians are not surprised by Handy’s recognition that the gift of human choice also creates the occasion for sin. Still, we do tend to forget his conclusion that paradox is endemic to religious faith and life as well as to the

¹ (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1994), 12–13.

rest of life. There are paradoxes that cannot be resolved, indeed must not be resolved but maintained, if faith and life are to continue.

All of you graduating today have been exposed at some point in your careers to what is known as theological field education. Do you know what kind of student has the most trouble with field education? It is one who has what educators call "a low tolerance for ambiguity." That is *not* an ideological thing. Conservatives can have it, and liberals can have it! It involves an unwillingness to believe that someone else can be a person of genuine Christian faith and still arrive at different social, cultural, or political conclusions from those you have reached. There is a desire in such people to solve, or resolve, or dissolve the paradoxes one encounters in life. It creates the religious zealot and, carried to extremes, the fanatic!

F. Scott Fitzgerald said the mark of a first-class mind is the ability to hold two opposing ideas at the same time and still be able to function. The Christian leader needs to understand the imperative to maintain the paradoxes in this complex and ever-changing world. What are some of them?

I. THE PARADOX OF OUR HUMANITY

In the eighth Psalm we read, "What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God." Yes, the Hebrew here uses the word *elohim*. We are little less than divine beings. We are capable of intelligence, reason, compassion, hope, love; yet, we are so prone to the demonic: irrationality, pride, greed, oppression, violence. Which are we? We are a paradox! We forget that to our peril when we are tempted to claim or to expect too much of our humanity.

We prayed and worked for the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa. However, we put a black and white face on the violence in that country. Now there is violence of black on black. As in Rwanda and Somalia, it is not racial but tribal violence. We named the former Soviet Union "the evil empire" and worked to bring about its downfall. We rejoiced that former iron-curtain countries would be free—and we got Bosnia and the emergence of ethnic and nationalistic strife. In Northern Ireland white Christians *may* have stopped the killing of one another that has gone on for years. Whenever we think about or plan for human beings and their life together, we must remember that they are a paradox! The paradox is human, not racial, not ethnic, not gender. The Christian faith maintains that paradox when it reminds us that we are *all* sinners before God.

II. THE PARADOX OF FAITH AND WORKS

The author of Hebrews has this to say about the Christian religion: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (11:1). The Christian knows that faith is the assurance of *what it reveals* and of *what it undergirds*. The paradox of Christian faith is that we are saved by faith—not by *what faith engenders*.

In an action-and-results-oriented culture it is very difficult to keep that reality in view. The paradox at the heart of the Christian faith is called "grace." In Philippians we read, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (2:12-13). We know that there can be good works without faith—we have seen and worked with self-sacrificing people of other faiths and of no faith. We also know that there cannot be vital Christian faith without works. Yes, "faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2:26). Still, works of this kind are not the ultimate purpose of faith. Today, there are too many of us Christians who value faith only for the works it produces, whether they are the enhancement of personal confidence and esteem or some social change and adjustment. However, this is to make faith irrelevant—not relevant, surprisingly, but irrelevant—because such works can and do exist on their own.

What cannot exist without faith is holiness, a vision, an awareness, an experience of God. It was Rudolf Otto who reminded us that the holy, what he called the "numinous," is "a category of value." Any theology or religion, he maintained, that transfers that mystical sense of the holy into purely rational ethics and further attenuates that into moral concepts has failed to maintain the paradox of faith and works.² Christian faith and Christian works intersect at the paradox of the cross, without which works lose their divine compulsion and faith loses the redemptive presence and the ineffable mystery of the Holy God. Maintain the paradox of the cross!

III. THE PARADOX OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE CORPORATE

I know a young man of my son's generation who became a scholar of the Japanese language and culture. He explained a significant aspect of the Japanese legal system. If two disputants go into civil court, the first thing the court wants to know is what each individual litigant understands to have been his or her responsibility in the matter under dispute. Think of how that contrasts with the United States where we go into a dispute insisting on our

² *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey, 2d ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), chap. 8.

rights! The difference is that when you begin by articulating responsibility, you begin from the perspective of the whole social system. We vigorously pursue our individual rights at the expense of the rest of society. Corporate social good, however, is not the sum of individual rights.

Unfortunately, we in the church have adopted the habits and mindset of our culture. Each of us *is* significant—but not so significant that the whole of a church or society should be expected to twist itself into conformity to our needs and desires. Every time we feel oppressed, repressed, or simply depressed, the whole world is not going to jump to attention. The paradox is that every expansion of individual rights impinges upon the social order just as every social restriction impinges on the right of some individuals. We are all still in shock at the tragic bombing in Oklahoma City last month. Who will ever forget that photograph of a fire chief holding a dead child in his arms because a few individuals, fearful of their government's intrusion in their lives and asserting what they believed to be their rights, brought death to over 160 people? An extreme, of course! Yet as we respond to protect the social order and still maintain individual rights, hard won in some cases, what will we do? Civilization, by definition, is always a fine-tuning of this paradox of individual and corporate rights and responsibilities.

The Christian faith requires us to be concerned about our neighbors. Yet, how prone we in the church are to define the neighbor in terms of the very narrow focus of some interest group that has our current attention. We all really begin to grow up when we shake off a kind of pre-Copernican psychology that we and our interests command the center of God's attention. Frankly, I want to believe that God, who is truly God, has more serious matters to be concerned about than simply me. "His eye is on the sparrow," I know—but remember, the biblical text behind that song says that not a sparrow falls without God's notice; it does not say that God always does something about it.

The reason these paradoxes become so important to our living together as the church in today's world is because of what they imply about our understanding of sin, forgiveness, and responsibility. Put bluntly, we have no trouble pointing out corporate guilt, but we are very embarrassed to confront individual sin. There are so many "thems" out there who are guilty—so many "isms" we can denounce. So few "mea culpas."

Marsha Witten, in her recent book *All Is Forgiven: The Secular Message in American Protestantism*, gives us Christians some uncomfortable insights into ourselves. She has studied preaching in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and in the Southern Baptist Convention. While there are differences, of course, the major conclusion fits us all. Witten writes,

The concept of "sin" has been accommodated to fit secular sensibilities . . . the language frequently cushions the listener . . . as it employs a variety of softening rhetorical devices. . . the device of selectivity, exemplified in the omission of the foundational doctrine of original sin; the device of deflection, through which sin is projected off listeners and onto groups of outsiders; the device of mitigation, employed to modify the potential for audience identification with sinful characters; and the device of therapeutic tolerance, through which sin is translated as errant behavior, explanations for misdeeds are sought in the social context rather than in the individual, and the response of judgment is replaced by that of empathy.³

In our mistaken notion that it is "more pastoral" we have developed such an empathy with the sinner that we do not even know where personal responsibility begins anymore, and we have so blurred the lines between the individual and the corporate that we finally accept almost all individual behavior without judgment and without blame. All is forgiven. That is God's business! You think I exaggerate?

Last January, the treasurer of the national Episcopal Church resigned her \$120,000-a-year position. In February it was reported that she had allegedly embezzled 2.2 million dollars while the national church was reducing its staff by one-third because of the drop in income. The former treasurer was quoted as saying that, in the opinion of her psychiatrist, "I experienced a breakdown precipitated by many factors external to me." She cited "the pain, abuse and powerlessness I have felt during the years I worked as a lay woman on a senior level at the church headquarters." I wonder how the families of the one-third of the national staff who lost their jobs empathize with this person who suffered so much for a mere \$120,000 a year. The Episcopal Church has not yet decided whether to bring criminal charges. All may be forgiven, probably in the name of what Marsha Witten identifies as "therapeutic tolerance." We practice a grace so cheap, it is too bad Jesus did not apologize to Pilate. He might have avoided that messy crucifixion!

These are some crucial paradoxes you who are graduating today have to live with as the church enters the twenty-first century. Remember that the gospel has always been foolishness and a stumbling block to the non-Christian, but "to those who are the called," Christ *is* "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24). Maintain the paradoxes and you will keep the faith! God be with you.

³ (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 101.

A Generous Orthodoxy

by THOMAS W. GILLESPIE

FAREWELL REMARKS TO THE CLASS OF 1995
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SEMINARY

THE EVANGELICAL theologian Carl F. H. Henry once lectured at Yale on the inadequacies of “narrative theology” as represented by, among others, Hans Frei. In his response to the lecture, Frei observed that “many things are needed in the Christian church” today. Sound theology is not the first of them, by any means, but it sure would help a little now and then.

We all try, from time to time, to contribute towards that end. In Frei’s words,

My own vision of what might be propitious for our day, split as we are, not so much into denominations as into schools of thought, is that we need a kind of generous orthodoxy which would have in it an element of liberalism—a voice like the *Christian Century*—and an element of evangelicalism—the voice of *Christianity Today*. I don’t know if there is a voice between those two, as a matter of fact. If there is, I would like to pursue it.¹

This morning, in these brief farewell remarks, I, too, would like to pursue such a voice by attending to Frei’s intriguing allusion to a “generous orthodoxy.”

Orthodoxy is a term that conveys the notion of “right opinion” or “established belief.” Now, most of us think our opinions are right, and established beliefs emerge in virtually every field of inquiry. So, there is, for example, a Freudian orthodoxy, a Marxist orthodoxy, and even, according to the book review section of *The New York Times* last Sunday, a Darwinian orthodoxy. Orthodoxies appear in politics and economics as well as in religion. But it is the last field that concerns us most directly in our present context.

It is worth noting that fully one-third of all Christians in the world belong to Orthodox churches. There is also that Protestant orthodoxy that developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and was represented so well at Princeton Theological Seminary in the nineteenth century. In my student days neoorthodoxy was all the rage. Today, of course, the spirit of orthodoxy is alive and well as political correctness.

¹ Hans W. Frei, *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays*, ed. George Hunsinger and William C. Placher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 207–8. My attention was drawn to this quotation by George Hunsinger through an unpublished essay, “What Can Evangelicals and Postliberals Learn From Each Other?”

My point is the simple one that we all, whatever our theology may be, have a vested interest in the concept, if not the word, orthodoxy. We all think that our theological opinions are right and that we should not hold them under any other conviction. Further, most of us, I dare say, are so convinced of the rightness of our beliefs that we would like to see them *established* in our respective communities of faith—either by persuasion or by compulsion.

Matters would be simpler if the division of opinion in the churches just now were a matter of polarization between liberal and conservative. But the balkanization of our intellectual culture these days has impacted theology as well as other disciplines. Formerly, the Christian church in America was characterized by its denominational divisions. Now, as Hans Frei noted in his response to Carl Henry, the denominations are split into “schools of thought” that seem to be myriad in number. Polarization is not our problem; fragmentation is.

So the Class of 1995 goes forth today into a world and into a church that are filled with orthodoxies, filled with people who hold right opinions over against other people who claim to hold other opinions rightly. You go forth to minister in a church where it seems that no camp or school of thought or party has either the intellectual power or the political muscle to establish its opinion by persuasion or compulsion. This is the point where the other term in Frei’s phrase becomes crucial. We have a need, he claimed, for a *generous* orthodoxy.

My dictionary defines “generosity” as “liberality in spirit” or “liberality in giving.” A generous person is one who is “magnanimous,” “kindly,” and “openhanded.” The primary synonym for “generous” is “liberal.” Think of that—a liberal orthodoxy! For many that is an oxymoron, but is it? Is it impossible to hold our “right opinions” with magnanimity and kindness and openhandedness toward those who hold opposing convictions with equal conviction? Or is it just too much trouble? Or are we so insecure, intellectually and emotionally, in our own opinions that we are compelled to treat every opponent as an enemy?

Hans Frei demonstrated what he meant by a “generous orthodoxy” when he went on to say:

I am not well practiced in discussion with evangelical orthodoxy, but this is a great opportunity for me because I think no one has done as much in our generation in America towards making that conversation possible as one between friends in the faith rather than enemies as Dr. Henry, and therefore it is a great privilege for me to make a very quick response.²

² Ibid., 208.

That is a magnanimous, kindly, and openhanded tribute to an articulate and vigorous advocate of evangelical orthodoxy by one who has been styled as a postliberal theologian. And it is a model for us.

Robert Wuthnow, our neighbor and professor of sociology at Princeton University, comments on the importance of ecclesial generosity in his book *The Struggle for America's Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals and Secularism*. Without denying the importance of passionate convictions or the necessity of settling disputes legislatively in the church, Wuthnow emphasizes the equal importance and necessity of human "compassion" if there is to be unity amid our diversity. Compassion, he writes, "requires efforts not only to understand one's opponents' views but to identify with the suffering of one's opponent."³

It seldom occurs to us that the opinions of our opponents are shaped and driven, like our own, by experiences of life that make attractive a hermeneutics of despair or desperation. But when it does, we are drawn deeper into the Christian life—where suffering and love, conviction and compassion comingle. The apostle Paul speaks of this kind of generous orthodoxy in his letter to the Galatians:

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another. (5:13–15)

There is a Middle Eastern parable that underscores the warning that concludes this text. The parable tells of the scorpion in the Sinai desert that asked a duck to carry him across the Red Sea to Egypt. The duck replied, "How foolish do you think I am? If I let you climb on my back, you would bite me and kill me with your poison."

"How foolish do you think I am?" the scorpion responded. "If I bit you and you died, I would drown."

The argument, based upon self-interest, convinced the duck, and he allowed the scorpion to climb up onto his back. Halfway across the Red Sea the scorpion bit the duck.

"Why did you do that?" the duck demanded. "Now we will both die."

"You forget," said the scorpion, "this is the Middle East."

There is more than enough of that poison in our world today, manifested

³ Robert Wuthnow, *The Struggle for America's Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals and Secularism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 94.

not only in the Middle East and in Bosnia but also in nerve-gas attacks upon civilians in Tokyo and in the bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City.

Now you go forth from this commencement into such a world, graduates of Princeton Theological Seminary, one and all. I know you carry your convictions with passion. I would be gravely disappointed if it were otherwise. But I urge you to temper your passion with compassion. For the world needs to see in the church the possibility and the actuality of a *generous orthodoxy*. To that I commit you in the name of the true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Makes Me Wanna Holler

by BRIAN K. BLOUNT

Brian K. Blount, Assistant Professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, was this year's baccalaureate preacher. He is the author of Cultural Interpretation: Reorienting New Testament Criticism.

TEXTS: Mark 7:24–30

Isaiah 11:6–9

LET ME TELL you about my parents, Edward and Doris. When I was growing up, my two brothers and I thought they were omnipotent. I can remember being in church, and my mother working with the Missionary Circle and my dad sitting on the deacon's bench and my brothers and I thinking, well, we're all by our lonesome in the pew now; we can do whatever we please: laugh a little, move around a little, play a little. Our parents can't get up in the middle of the service and come over and tell us to quiet down. It'd be too embarrassing for them. But, you see, they had this power that reached out across vast distances, a power that enabled them to transform situations without actually having to move over *to* those situations. *They had this look.* This dark pall would come over their eyes as they heard our gleeful disrespect for the worship, and all they had to do *was do that look.* The look God used to give parents the moment a child was born, the look that says, "I don't have to come over there, I can stand right here in the *now* and make you know that in the not too distant *not yet* you're gonna pay." That's what we biblical scholars call eschatological power. That kind of countenance makes three little boys sit up straight, quiet down, and start *praising the Lord.*

I found out though, as I got older, and life got more complex, there were other powers—other *great* powers. And they didn't always wield their strength to help make a person stronger and better. When I went to the eighth grade I left my segregated elementary school and entered the world of integration. My cosmos was transformed. And so was my concept of power and who thought they really manipulated it. My brothers and I had done remarkably well in our segregated environment. But now, my parents were being told, "Things are going to change. Those boys aren't going to be so smart when they start being compared to those white children." My first year, my grades taught the doubters a lesson. But my next year I learned a lesson of my own. *There are principalities and powers over which your best effort and your most sincere determination have no control.* During the first six weeks of my first advanced, college-preparatory course, World History, despite all the effort I'd put in, I received a D—just a hair trigger above failure. News of it spread. And it

spread fast. I don't know how it spread; I was so embarrassed that I hadn't told a soul. But everywhere I went, everyone knew. I remember one teacher telling me, "I wouldn't want to be at your house when *this* report card gets opened up."

My World History teacher also taught Advanced English and Advanced Chemistry. Anybody on a college track was going through her one way or another. That meant that all black children who went through her on their way *up* to college went *down* in their grades. My older brother, who would graduate at the top of his university class in physics and chemistry, barely passed her chemistry class even though he gave the class a maximum effort. My parents knew what was going on. They understood the message being sent. But they didn't, as omnipotent as I'd once thought they were, have the power to transform the situation. The school considered her a tough teacher. The school understood why the best black students struggled in her classes but in no others; she was tougher than any other teacher. The school maintained that she needed to be in a position to work with every black child headed for college because she would teach them how much they needed to work to survive in college. She didn't fail me or my brother. But I knew later on what I didn't know then. That was never her intention. She wanted to destroy something more precious than a report card or a summer that would have to be spent in summer school, making up for failed credits. She wanted to destroy something in our spirit, our self-confidence. She wanted us to believe what we'd been hearing—that we weren't good enough, that no matter how hard we worked, we'd never have the capacity to compete with the best and brightest college-bound white students. And she wanted us to infect my younger brother with that fear so that by the time he got to her he'd already know. I couldn't get out of that class; I couldn't get around her. She stood across the horizon of my college track like a sentry, the way many others like her stand guard at the portals of opportunity even today. And my parents didn't have the power to stop her. I had to take it. And take it. I remember how, every time I handed her my report card to have a grade entered on it and took back a D, *it made me wanna shake my fist in her face and holler*.

That year, I learned from the power of my parents' determination. No, they weren't omnipotent. But they did still have a power. No matter what was happening *now* they had the power to see into the realm of the *not yet*. And it was on that "not yet" that they focused my vision. They taught me that even though the way she treated me—oppressed me—made me want to holler against the wind, to scream out my fury, I ought to channel it in other ways. Not extinguish it but feed off it. Not silence the scream but holler in another

way. Make my life the kind of scream that would make people like her, and the people and the institutions that created them and used them, see that, despite them, and even because of them, I could muster the power to transform the picture of life they wanted to paint for me and people like me. What that teacher did to me, what people and institutions like her continue to do to people every day in every place in this country, makes me wanna holler still. I figure a person can't stop hollering until the world, weary of the sound, weary of the challenge, takes notice and transforms. As a matter of fact, I think that is exactly the kind of thing that Syrophonician woman was thinking as she walked up before Jesus and his disciples. Her effort was for Mark, I think, a symbol, an example of how a screaming life can transform an oppressive life situation.

Now, this is the historical situation that confronted her, a situation she thought, given the condition of her possessed daughter, was supremely unfair and oppressive. The gift of divine power incarnate in the man Jesus was cordoned off so that her people were unable to avail themselves of its transformative benefits. Jesus, she'd heard, and was about to hear again *from Jesus himself*, was sent only to the Jews. Her people, no matter how possessed and oppressed they were *now*, would have to wait until some unforeseen, uncalculated *not yet* to receive the kind of spiritual, physical, and social deliverance he represented.

Consider Mark's presentation of Jesus in the passage we are considering this afternoon. Jesus' statement, the one where he says he isn't supposed to help her, the one where he compares gentiles to dogs, is so inflammatory and so clear that the conclusion is certain. Jesus felt he was sent only to the Jews. Even this gentile woman, who has just been supremely insulted, agrees. She contests neither Jesus' harsh remark nor the reality it conveys. As one commentator puts it, "She accepts the analogy and its implications, only pointing out that when the children are fed, the dogs also get some small benefit incidentally."¹

But there is an opening that allows for a transformative possibility. At 13:10 and 14:9, we have two statements by Jesus that suggest the gospel about him will be preached to all the world, *to all peoples*. In 10:45 and 14:24 Jesus proclaims that his life of service was on behalf of *not* some people *but the many*, suggesting his concern crosses national and ethnic boundaries. It appears, then, while Jesus did *historically* focus his mission efforts on his own people, he *ultimately* believed his mission and message would incorporate the gentiles as well. And even as Mark is recording his *now* of Jesus' limited ministry, he

¹ D. E. Nineham, *The Gospel of Saint Mark* (New York: Penguin Books, 1969), 199.

seizes upon this universal possibility of the *not yet* and he looks for a point and place of transformation. A place where the turn from one people to all people was made. A place where somebody's scream for transformation turned Jesus around in his Palestinian tracks and turned around the very destiny of his gospel message. Mark looked, I think, to this Syrophonician woman.

There is no doubt Mark sees Jesus' confrontation with her as a transformative moment. When Jesus leaves her, having granted her request, he doesn't go back home; he doesn't return to his own people. He goes directly to the Decapolis, a network of ten Greek cities, and engages his liberating, healing ministry *there*. A turn, a transformation has occurred. And the pivot point is the narrative holler of this Syrophonician woman.

I imagine, when Jesus told her he was specifically sent *not* to help her daughter but to help his own people, *she must have wanted to shake her fists in his face and holler*. And in her own way that is exactly what she does. *She stands there toe to toe with somebody she thought had the ability to control cosmic and demonic forces and she challenged what he was saying*. Here's power! The power of a woman so determined to see her daughter's life transformed that she would dare to challenge the very system of salvation. Maybe in the "not yet," maybe somewhere in the not too distant future, the power that Jesus represented would be represented on behalf of her people. But she couldn't wait for the "not yet." Her daughter needed Jesus' power *now*. And so she acted *now*!

In Matthew's Gospel the story is even more detailed. We know Mark has a tendency to shorten the stories, to make them more compact, so it's nice to have Matthew's longer versions to open up the accounts some. In Matthew 15, he describes how the woman came crying out to Jesus, "Have mercy on me Son of David. My daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But Jesus just ignores her. Ignores her! You don't think she was ready to holler? Then, to make matters worse, Jesus' disciples say, "Send her away, Jesus, for she is crying after us, disturbing us. Make her stop whining and go away." And Jesus backs them up! He turns to her and says, "Lady," and this was the line that Mark couldn't get out of his mind or his narrative account, "I wasn't sent to help your people. I wasn't sent to help your daughter." And then, Matthew says, she got down on her knees in front of Jesus and begged for his help. She must have been thinking, "I hear all these great things about you, I hear how powerful you are, how compassionate you are, how you make the impossible possible, how you turn night into day, how you bring life up out of the grave. If *you* turn away from me, I am without hope. Please, help me." But that's when Jesus says that thing about not throwing his salvific power to the dogs. Can't help you and your people, who are like dogs. It's at that point you

figure, this woman's got to break. I know his disciples must have been thinking, now, now she's got to break. Now she's got to shut up and leave us alone.

Scholars have long wondered why Mark and Matthew kept this story in their Gospel accounts because it tends to make Jesus look like he didn't want to help her. I think they kept it in, particularly Mark, because she is exactly what Jesus is: a transformer. Because she doesn't break apart. She breaks back bad on Jesus. She does to Jesus what Jesus does to the Pharisees and Sadducees. She takes his response, stands up to what that response means, and then turns the response upside down and inside out. "Sure, Jesus, I don't care if the food *is meant* for the children, that doesn't mean that your loving, gracious Abba God wants everybody and everything else to go starving. That can't be what you're saying, Jesus, is it?" And Jesus marveled, evidently as much at her guts and determination to say it as for what she'd said. And when Jesus celebrates her remark to him, her standing up to him, I think Mark thinks he was maybe smiling inside and saying, "Yeah, this is what I want. *This* is what I've been looking for. What a contrast to the sheep who follow me." I think this was the message Mark wanted *his* sheep, *his* flock to get. Yeah, this woman's attitude is what Jesus celebrates, not the people like the disciples who never really seem to *understand* what he is doing or have the determination and the courage to do what he is doing.

Look at Mark's portrait of the disciples. As the story unfolds, Jesus gets progressively tired of their obtuseness. At 4:40 he laments when he sees them frightened over a storm, even though *he* is in the boat with them, because they have no faith. At 6:52, when they are again terrified because of a storm in their lives, Mark laments that their hard hearts prevent them from understanding Jesus' real identity and power. At 8:18 Jesus himself wonders so greatly at their lack of faith, courage, and understanding that he asks them if their hearts are hardened. And we know that, after every moment when he explains they must suffer and die, their fear throws them into disarray, and they simply cannot understand it. Yes, Mark likes the fact they follow Jesus, but it's their lame, sheepish kind of following he apparently dislikes. We get this constant narration of the twelve men grazing along behind Jesus, rambling around, getting lost half the time, the other half not quite knowing exactly where they are, what they are doing, or what they are doing it for. No wonder Jesus told the parable of the Lost Sheep. That's who Mark thought was following him. Lost Sheep. Wandering. Grazing. Baa, baa, baa. So, when he celebrates, he celebrates the example of someone who is *not* a follower, not one of the flock. She walks into Mark's story out of left field in a striking way, as striking a

picture as, say, the picture of a wolf cutting a swathe of turmoil through a flock of once content, once comfortable, once calm, flaxen sheep. A she-wolf of determination to create transformation. When she challenges Jesus, he doesn't get angry. Instead it's almost as if he smiles proudly at what she does. His response to her acerbic, surprising, bold, ravenous remark is, in Matthew, "Nowhere have I seen such faith." Mark doesn't call it faith. He defines it as nerve. Nowhere has Jesus seen somebody so desperate for transforming someone else's world that she would have the nerve this woman has. "Look, you *sheep*," Mark appears to be telling his readers, "here's a *wolf*. She's what I think Jesus wants you to be like."

You know, I can see those sheepish disciples with Jesus wondering what to do when they hear this woman, this *Syrophonician* woman, yelling after them. And I can hear them tell Jesus, "That woman is yelling after us. Maybe you'd better go and shut her up, because it isn't right, doesn't look right, to have a man of your stature going around having strange women hollering after him—*especially strange gentile women*. Let's not diversify our discipleship—cause with somebody *like her*." In fact, I think Mark knew that, in his community, diversity was probably one of the top ten words folk didn't want to hear. But this Syrophonician woman doesn't care what they want to hear; she's determined that Jesus will hear her.

When I think of her situation, I think of an athletic-shoe commercial by the actor Dennis Hopper. You sports fans will remember it. It's one of his football ones. Hopper is dressed up as a deranged referee rifling through the locker of pro-football player Bruce Smith. He finally stumbles upon what he's been looking for—Smith's athletic shoes. And as he holds up one of those shoes, madly sniffing in the aroma, we see pictures of Bruce Smith crushing opponents on the football field. Then Dennis Hopper turns to the camera and says, "You know what Bruce would do if he saw me messing with his shoes?" Before he tells us we get another picture of Bruce Smith crushing some hapless player. The camera then shifts back to Dennis Hopper, who is now shuddering down to his knocking knees, as he says, "Bad things, man. Ba-a-a-d things." Now it may seem odd that, in a Reformed pantheon of such luminaries as John Calvin and Karl Barth, I would find a quotable from a rogue actor like Dennis Hopper, but for Mark I think this fits quite nicely. This is the maverick kind of thing I think appeals to Mark. You gotta imagine Jesus walking along with his twelve sheep, coming upon this she-wolf, and when those twelve turn and see her, see the ravenous look in her eyes, see the fury in her spirit, see the gut and determination in the way she gets up and

comes over to them, you can almost hear those twelve shuddering sheep bleating out, "Bad things, Jesus. Ba-a-a-d things."

Every sheep pen needs this kind of bad thing, this kind of Syrophonician wolf, every now and then. She's not so much an eat-'em-up kind of wolf as she is a shake-'em-up kind of wolf. She doesn't devour flesh. She devours complacency. She consumes the tendency to follow without understanding. She annihilates the tendency to try to understand without believing. She obliterates the timid desire to hide behind safe tradition. She demolishes the tendency to get caught up in the commonplace of ritual and habit and thinking that religious or academic routine is the same thing as faith. In fact, you know, she isn't so much a carnivore as she is a "routinivore." She isn't so much a carnivore as she is a "do-it-the-way-we've-always-done-it-ivore." She isn't so much a carnivore as she is an "I'm-gonna-go-with-the-flow-vote-with-everybody-else-stand-with-everybody-else-even-if-where-they're-standing-troubles-me-ivore." She isn't so much a carnivore as she is an "I'm-gonna-sit-here-and-be-silent-even-though-I-know-I-ought-to-stand-up-and-holler-but-I'm-afraid-people-won't-want-to-hear-what-I-have-to-say-ivore." She eats up doubts and fears; she devours that sheepish tendency to say, "Well somebody powerful told me to shut up so I'm gonna go over and blend in with the flock and shut up before I get sheared."

Remember, Jesus himself, the Good Shepherd, was a wolf of sorts. In the eyes of the leaders of his people in Palestine he wasn't a sheepish follower who did what he was told when he didn't think he was being told what was right. He wasn't a sheepish follower who observed the traditions he was given when he knew those traditions were damaging to God's cause and God's people. The religious leaders in Palestine felt they were shepherds of God's flock, too. But Jesus wasn't following. He said to them what this woman was saying to him. "If this is the way the kingdom road is going, I'm heading for an off-ramp. I'm not following. I don't care if the priests who follow in Aaron's and Moses' footsteps are doing the driving. No, I'm driving another route, even if I have to pave the road myself. I'm raising a contrary voice. The cries of my people make me want to holler out for a different direction, where the Sabbath doesn't stop healing, where the temple doesn't stop believing, where the Romans don't stop freedom, where Satan doesn't stop liberation, where the systems that bind don't hold God's people. I hear their cries, I see their struggles, I recognize that their leaders are shepherding them in the wrong direction, and it makes me wanna holler."

There's nothing so wrong with being a sheep. I guess most of us are. I know I am much of the time. But when life threatens you, when circumstances

oppress you, or people you love or the people whom God loves are oppressed like the way they oppressed that woman, you need to become a wolf. You don't go to church quietly; you don't listen to sermons and advice quietly; you don't go into seminary quietly and go out just as quietly; you don't take over a church and run it like a quiet professional administrator only looking at the bottom lines of money and membership; you howl against the night and the people who impose it. You raise your voice. You wanna holler like that woman until your voice and the actions that accompany it change your world. That's why every sheepfold, if you ask me, if you ask Mark, needs a wolf every now and then, needs somebody like this boundaries-breaking, shut-up-refusing, bold-being, back-talking, change-demanding, transform-tripping, Syrophonician woman.

You're going out to do ministry in a world that is very much like the world faced by that Syrophonician woman, a world like Jesus faced, a world about which Mark wrote. It's the kind of world Marvin Gaye sang about in his song entitled "Inner City Blues," where he sang the line "It makes me wanna holler and throw up both my hands." There are many voices in this world unfairly silenced, many lives oppressively trampled, many hopes brutally decimated. I know you know about this world because I've been reading your papers these last three years. In our course just this semester on the *kingdom* of God, many of you wrote passionately about the *fiefdoms* of humankind.

One person wrote about black males who not only have a life expectancy that is ten years shorter than their white counterparts' but who also have the highest rate of infant mortality in this country. They are being decimated on both ends of the life cycle. One in twenty-one of them will die before they reach adulthood. Fifty percent of them under twenty-one are unemployed. And while they make up only 6 percent of the U.S. population, they make up half the population of male prisoners in the penal system. *Doesn't that make somebody wanna holler?* Another paper told me there is this community where you've worked and lived in field education that is so troubled by drugs, violence, abuse, and hopelessness that it seems as if it is, like that Syrophonician woman's daughter, possessed. *Doesn't that make somebody wanna holler?* Another paper told me how brutally women are treated in our society, in the world, and even, and sometimes especially, in the church. *Doesn't that make somebody wanna holler?* Your papers have told me about the struggles of the homeless, about the plight of the impoverished, and the inability and sometimes the contracted lack of desire on the part of our governments to create transformation that truly transforms for those in society who truly need change the most. *Doesn't that make somebody wanna holler?*

I read in the newspapers that the Governor of the State of New Jersey has declared, after talking to two or three, maybe five or six of her citizens, that all us black males are out playing pregnancy games, and I figure she figures she can say it and get away with it nowadays because the president of her primary state university has already told her and the world that black folk are so intellectually inferior that maybe they won't even know they're enduring a class-action insult. *That makes me wanna holler!*

But I'm also wondering. Where are the hollering wolves? I know where the sheep are. I can count on them being where I always expect them to be because, as sheep usually are, they're fenced in. I can go to any green pasture on any Sunday morning at 11 A.M. (maybe 10 A.M. if they graze early in the summer; maybe 9:30 and 11:00 A.M. if they have so many sheep crammed into the pen that they need to graze twice on a Sunday) and see the flock gathered. What I'm hollering for nowadays are a few wolves who'll run into the flock and drive the sheep out of the pasture onto the rocky terrain where people are socially and politically and economically suffering, struggling, and dying with the terrible holler of transformation rising up from their prophetic throats. I'm hollering with my heart in my hands to see the passion in your work here in this seminary translate into passionate pocket moments of the kingdom of God that resist the destructive trends out there.

I remember a revival service in my home church when I was growing up. Those services were always pretty powerful emotionally and spiritually. I remember an especially powerful preacher. And even though I was only eleven or twelve years old, I still remember him as probably the best preacher I have ever heard. Outside the sanctuary on this hot August night, a frightening, dog-days-of-summer electrical storm was erupting. We could hear the thunder roar as the preacher whipped the congregation into a spiritual frenzy that became a storm all its own when the choir got up to sing. About halfway through the invitational hymn, the lights flashed out and darkness swallowed us. The electric organ was gone, but the choir didn't stop. Neither did the organist. She slid across the organ bench and down the big drop to the lower piano stool and caught up with the choir and led them like a shepherd through a valley of darkness right on time. I remember how that smooth move fired up an already explosive congregation. There in the darkness I heard more noise in worship than I had ever heard before in my life. Screams, shouts, and the constant echoing of that name, "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" I suspect that the darkness allowed some of the quieter folk the freedom to shout in a way they ordinarily wouldn't have shouted in the light of the religious day. But they were shouting now. It was loud now. If I pause for a second, I can still hear the

fury and see the lightning flash. The one thing I always had against those revivals though, even as a young child, was that the people who engineered and participated in those loud raucous worship services could be awfully quiet when they walked out of the church and walked into the screams cluttering up the audio tracks of the world. Seemed like the allegedly agitated screaming in church was really a form of comfortable quiet because it didn't agitate the kind of screaming that needed to be heard in places like those integrating schools.

That night, that service provoked in me one of the angriest nightmares I have ever had. I couldn't get the service out of my mind. I couldn't get the name of Jesus that kept being shouted over and over and over and over again in the darkness out of my mind. And the next thing I knew I was shouting myself in the darkness of my bedroom. There were people all around me, as in the sanctuary, and they were all focused on me, shouting, yelling, screaming, I don't know what. It was just that they kept yelling. Wouldn't stop yelling. And the next thing I knew I was yelling back. I kept yelling back until I heard this calm voice calling my name instead of Jesus'. "Brian, Brian," my mother was saying. "It's just a dream."

But dreams are so real to children. And this one, she could tell, wouldn't let go. That's when she offered up what she knew would be a calming remedy. "Think about Jesus," she said. "Just think about Jesus. That will calm you down. Just think about Jesus." I felt my mother's calming embrace, I listened to her soothing voice, I looked in the darkness for her gentle expression, and I wanted to say, but I couldn't quite form the words, because I didn't know how it would sound to her, but I was thinking, "You know, it's precisely because I *am* thinking about Jesus that this nightmare is happening to me." I found out that night what I've been finding out ever since: *Thinking about Jesus will mess you up!* Thinking about Jesus will quiet the shouts of hallelujah and the joyous, saved acclamations in sanctuaries of worship and raise the decibel level of the cries of protest and the whispers of agony outside the sanctuaries until the sound slashes our saved souls and shatters our salvific slumber.

Jesus, I've found, won't let you rest in peace. His reputation, his power, his mission call out to you the way they called out to that Syrophonician woman. When your world is turned upside down, his very being hollers out to you. He won't let you graze in the fold quietly, he won't let you slumber in the sanctuary indefinitely, he won't let you contemplate the power of being immersed in the Spirit without challenging you to use that power in the physical terrors of the world around you. The way his reputation and power pulled that tormented woman out of her home, from the bedside of her

daughter, to holler for his help, to holler for his transformative power, to become a hollering instrument of that transformation herself. So now who and what he is call out to us. Thinking about him makes you sensitive to noise. You hear people crying around you. To think about him makes you vulnerable to hope. You believe things you never would have dared dream of believing before.

I think that's why Mark kept this story of this Syrophonician woman in his Gospel. He wanted us to holler for transformation the way that woman hollered for the transformation of her daughter's life situation, even when all the signals say, "You ought to shut up, give up, and go home." If that woman could stand up to Jesus, I think Jesus was telling us, we ought to be able to stand up to anybody else or anything else on this planet. "You want change?" he seems to be telling the woman. "Then you're gonna have to fight for it. You're gonna have to raise your voice."

That's what I think a good seminary teaches people to do—to holler. Think about our master plan. We start you hollering from the moment we put you in OT101 and NT101 and CH101 and TH101 and General Ministries. I've heard seminary students in my own day and your day holler about the situations that confront them in seminary. I hope your voices will *really* howl once you go forth from this place and confront the situations that confront our people, God's people. 'Cause there's a seminary out there where you're gonna learn lessons about faith and doubt, victory and defeat, God and Satan, that we could never teach you in here.

Sometimes people tell me that we live in a time without prophecy. Perhaps we do. But perhaps if we can't have prophets, maybe we can have Syrophonician women; perhaps we can have people like you, people who, like that woman, hear the cries of people around them so acutely that they are willing to stand up to anybody and any power and demand transformation.

Isaiah, you know, has this vision. It's an eschatological vision. It's about the wolf lying down with the lamb in peace and tranquility. That's Isaiah's *not-yet* vision. New Testament writers like Mark appreciated that *not-yet* vision and all, but they also wanted to drag pieces of that *not yet* into the *now*. I think this Syrophonician woman represents for Mark what it would look like if that *not-yet* vision of the wolf and the lamb was dragged into the *now*. It's still a good vision. Because in the *now* the wolf sure would make that lamb mighty nervous. In the *now* the wolf sure would keep that lamb sorely agitated. In the *now* the panting, salivating wolf sure would keep that perspiring little lamb thinking about what he could do and ought to do urgently to bring God's *not-yet* future a little closer to present reality. In the *now*, when the wolf lies

down with the lamb, you're gonna hear a little bit more than some quiet bleating; you're gonna hear some hollering for transformation.

What's it gonna take to make you wanna holler? And when it happens, what are you going to *do* about it? Or perhaps a better thing to ask is, what are you going to *be* about it? Don't be sheepish. Be Syrophonician, like a wolf.

The Vocation of Christian Ethics Today

by MAX L. STACKHOUSE

*Max L. Stackhouse is the Stephen Colwell Professor of Christian Ethics at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is a graduate of DePauw University (B.A.), Nijenrode University, Holland (Certificate), and Harvard University (B.D., Ph.D.) and has authored or edited numerous books, including *Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization and Mission in Theological Education* and *On Moral Business: Classical and Contemporary Resources on Ethics and Economic Life* (co-edited with D. McCann, S. Roels, and P. Williams). He gave this inaugural address in Miller Chapel on December 7, 1994.*

IN THE face of so many Calvinists, I must begin with a confession. While I am very happy to be invited to join this distinguished institution, I am worried about the future of my soul. We know that divine joy is only to be realized in the life to come and that our callings in this life demand a sober earnestness; but my delight requires that I adopt a distinction drawn by a Puritan forebear, the Rev. William Secker. He acknowledged the pleasures of this world in relation to those of the life to come by stressing the difference between being truly happy and being fully happy.¹ The one is like Adam in the garden. The other only comes in heaven; but, he said, after Eve we can imagine it.

Besides Jean, the Eve of my life, others have contributed to my present state of mind. I mention first my new colleagues and the many gifted students I am privileged to teach. But also, I am grateful to join the wider tradition. We have moved into a wonderful house that first appeared on the town map in 1852 and later became an eating club managed by Mrs. Anna Amelia Benham, a dedicated servant of generations of clergy.²

I. A GENEALOGY OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS AT PRINCETON

In the same decade that Benham House was built, a lawyer in Philadelphia named Stephen Colwell published *New Themes for Protestant Clergy*³ and

¹ See his treatise *A Wedding Ring Fit for the Finger* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1658), 15.

² Kerr D. Macmillan et al., *The Benham Club* (Princeton, 1912), 21; cf. Roy Blair et al., *The Benham Club of Princeton* (Princeton, 1930). I am grateful to William O. Harris, Librarian for Archives and Special Collections, Luce Library, for drawing these and other helpful materials to my attention.

³ Stephen Colwell, *New Themes for Protestant Clergy* (Philadelphia, 1853).

several other essays that gained wide attention.⁴ He became known as one of the few who foresaw the transformations being wrought by the Industrial Revolution. He advocated the joining of social analysis to Christian ethics to shape the changing world. In this he anticipated the Social Gospel by a generation. From 1854 to 1871, he served as a trustee of this seminary and was the moving spirit of the effort to establish a chair in Christian Ethics and to define its focus in relation to Apologetics and "Applied Christianity." It was to be, in effect, the first chair of its sort in the land, although his name was not attached to it until after World War II.

The study of ethics at Princeton has even deeper roots. Among the books my father left me is *American Thought* by Woodbridge Riley. In a chapter on the "Princeton School," Riley traces the common-sense realism of Reid's modified Aristotelianism to Witherspoon, who, Riley reports, taught the first course in ethics at Princeton, in the College, a century before Colwell.⁵ The course apparently consisted mostly of thundering against the materialism of Hobbes, the idealism of Berkeley, and the skepticism of Hume.

In some ways, I claim this heritage as my own, for I share Witherspoon's opposition to these views. But I suspect that I do not thunder as well as he did. And I was disappointed to learn that he also thundered against Jonathan Edwards, once pastor of my home church, who came to Princeton with epistemic insights from Plato and aspects of moral psychology from Locke woven into his classically orthodox convictions. Witherspoon's views also differed from those of Samuel Stanhope Smith, professor of moral philosophy here after 1779, the year Witherspoon died. Smith taught a Humean view both Witherspoon and Edwards opposed. When he became the College president in 1795, the eventual founding of the Seminary, distinct from the College, was inevitable.

I shall, for the most part, modulate Witherspoon, depart from Smith, and take my place on Edwards' side of things. We do learn from experience—from the observation of the circumstances, actual practices of disciplined living, and habituated judgments that constitute common sense, as Witherspoon argued. But Edwards also knew that we do not only learn from experience. We also learn from forms of consciousness prior to experience, what some call tacit knowledge or background beliefs, but which is also connected with intuitive insight. It is very bad form in many circles to speak of such things in our excessively experiential age; but at the minimum, I do not

⁴ The best recent treatment of his life is by Bruce Morgan: "Stephen Colwell (1800–1871): Social Prophet before the Social Gospel," in *Sons of the Prophets*, ed. Hugh T. Kerr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 123–47.

⁵ Woodbridge Riley, *American Thought* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1915), chap. 5.

think it at all wise to deny that our curiosity, will, and admittedly fragile capacity to recognize falsehood and injustice drive us toward some experiences and away from others. Indeed, we shape experience through these internal preunderstandings that seem to be so constituted that we seek to find, and can “re-cognize” and “consent” to the order and beauty of grace, to that which approximates truth, justice, and love, when we experience it.

Humans are not empty constellations of experience, a fact that makes both vice possible and ethics necessary, and it is an empty age or vacuous philosophy that finds it embarrassing to speak of anything like “soul.” Rather, we humans are rooted in a plenitude beyond what today counts as experience, and we are thus able to hope for, trust, and receive more than we directly experience. Deep in the recesses of our being, the traces of our divine origin are present. It is for this reason that all can know something of the difference between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, good and evil, even if we have not experienced all forms of them and cannot attain the true, the right, the good, the beautiful unaided. This was accented in a distinctive way by Charles Hodge, who also taught ethics in the Seminary in the half century after Smith, and whose deep interest in social and ethical issues was supported by Colwell.⁶

More recent giants who shaped Christian Ethics have also lectured here: Abraham Kuyper, Emil Brunner, Paul Ramsey (who reestablished Christian Ethics at the University), M. M. Thomas, James Luther Adams, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Indeed, soon after King’s lecture here, Lefferts A. Loetscher led a group of students, with the blessing of the school, to march in Selma, a key moment in my life too. Ethics is high minded, but it is dirty footed also or it only floats in the air of classrooms.

Many who taught here knew that. Gibson Winter helped connect social analysis to ethics in regard to the modern city and in the effort to develop a church and society program. Further, if I may mention some whom I have known personally, Bernhard Anderson, Paul Meyer, James Hastings Nichols, and Karlfried Froehlich, each in his own way, touched the delicate nerve of descriptive historical research and critical normative thinking. Such scholarship brings invaluable resources to ethics. Discerning the historical ethos and plumbing the inexhaustible riches of scripture as mediated to us by those who ponder, and seek to live by, its meanings over the centuries are indispensable to Christian Ethics in each generation.

From the establishment of the Archibald Alexander Chair of Ethics and

⁶ My thanks to my colleagues John W. Stewart, for his help in this, and Richard Osmer and Charles Ryerson, as well as Ken Rothman, departmental secretary, for reading parts of this address in the process of its preparation. My colleague Sang Lee also consulted with me about Edwards. None of them is responsible for any errors I may make.

Apologetics by Stephen Colwell in 1871, until the chair in this field was renamed as a chair in Christian Ethics in his honor, it was held by Charles A. Aiken (1871–82); Francis Landey Patton (1882–1903), who was also President of Princeton University and, later, of the Seminary; William Brenton Greene (1903–28); and John E. Kuizenga (1930–40). The position was also held by Joseph Hromadka (1940–47, as Guest Professor), and Bela Vasady (1947–49, also as Guest).⁷

As it turns out, the two incumbents of the renamed chair are not only scholars of particular note but were personal mentors. The first of these, Paul Lehmann, was my teacher at Harvard. He taught my generation to use biblical imagery and theological concepts in social, historical, and political analysis. I share my colleague Nancy Duff's continuing interest in his work.

When Lehmann assumed this chair in 1950, he stressed several points in his inaugural address that remain valid.⁸ One is this: The most important doctrinal truths are not only "theological formulas" or "creedal confessions" apart from life, but lenses through which we may discern the future in the ever-pregnant present. The doctrine of the Trinity, for example, is not only "the key to the meaning of the Bible," but also "the clue to the knowledge of the truth about reality and about society." If we see this, a "dynamics of conduct" is evoked. Those who see life this way "fasten their eyes upon the shape of things to come in a dedicated expectation of fresh and purposeful manifestations of God's moving strength." They may become, by God's grace, parties to and agents of this divine *dynamis*. For example, when confidence in reason and tradition waned in old Rome, Christians were able to rebuild a broken civilization because "the triune God gave point to the future and politics made sense."⁹

A second major learning from Lehmann is one that I share with my colleague Peter Paris. Lehmann was a vigorous advocate of human rights and civil liberties. Soon after he was installed, President John A. Mackay issued his famous "Letter to Presbyterians," a trumpet blast against McCarthyism. It created a seismic reaction in the churches; but neither he nor Lehmann backed away from the challenge. Lehmann exercised the dirty-foot side of ethics and organized The Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, which

⁷ William K. Selden, *Princeton Theological Seminary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); and Officers and Graduates of the College, *The Princeton Book* (Boston: Houghton, Osgood and Company, 1879).

⁸ Paul L. Lehmann, "The Dynamics of Reformation Ethics," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 43, no. 4 (Spring 1950): 17–22.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 18–19.

planned a huge rally in New York City against McCarthyism and its demagogic exploitation of the communist threat.¹⁰

Lehmann sometimes overstated his case. For instance, he treats the "ancient tradition of natural law and of the law and institutions of Moses" as the "cracking bulwarks of an order that the moving strength of God had set aside," and he claimed that the medieval and reformation theologians "barricaded the dynamics of the community of the justified" behind them.¹¹ Yet he did not trust unprincipled persons or demagogues who bent constitutional order any more than the prophets or the Reformers did. Indeed, his passion for rights prompted him to hold views that demand a limited government, the separation of church and state, and social pluralism. He believed "Christian orthodoxy . . . and political liberalism . . . belong together."¹²

Charles West, with whom I sat at Paul Lehmann's memorial service, is of course the most recent incumbent of the Colwell chair. He too has been a mentor, but in other ways. As Lehmann and his generation struggled against the reactionary paganism of the fascist impulse of this century, West more systematically engaged in a sustained, critical dialogue with the secularism of modern socialism in the context of the contemporary ecumenical debates. His article on Christianity and Marxism in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* is unsurpassed.¹³

That critical dialogue was already present in his 1964 inaugural lecture. He applauds Marx for developing a movement "in which theory and practice were inextricably bound together on the premise that social existence determines consciousness."¹⁴ But he also charges that Marxism is a blind secular faith that "has been able to present itself as the science of society, never turning on its own faith its profound understanding of the role of ideology."¹⁵

As West knows, I grew more sharply skeptical than he about Marx's view of theory and practice and about the idea that social existence determines consciousness—even should Marxism or anything else turn its ideological analysis reflexively on itself. But West saw issues of missiology and ecumenic-

¹⁰ See John Mackay's "Letter to Presbyterians" as reproduced in *Princeton Seminary Alumni News* (Spring 1983): 21-23.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹² *Ibid.*, 20.

¹³ Charles C. West, "Marxism," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 9, ed. M. Eliade et al. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 240-49.

¹⁴ Charles C. West, "The Missionary Context of Christian Ethics," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 58, no. 1 (October 1964): 21.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

ity in the secularity of our world that Christian Ethics must surely continue to investigate. He wrote, for example, that some of the most substantive questions of ethics are to be found in politics, economics, and society. In these areas, we already find something of

a common understanding of the Good [that] has probably never in history been so universal as today.

It is rather in the understanding of Reality which underlies and in the long run validates the Good that the issue is joined. For here one can speak of consensus only on one negative premise: that the religious world-view more or less held in common by Christendom in the past and expressed in the life of its churches, no longer seems relevant or meaningful.¹⁶

West then identifies the deeper problem: The Christian faith is now more widely known around the world than ever before; but an ambiguity, a self-doubt about the faith, has appeared in the expanded "us"—in Christian churches, scholarship, and personal convictions. Thus, the problem of ethics becomes a question of what can and should sustain us when our frames of reference and our tools of discernment seem to many of us to be superfluous. As West says, the missionary concern of Christian ethics is thus "to discover the form of its witness" in this world.¹⁷ And this secular world is not beyond us, in foreign lands, ideologies, or religions; it is among us. Unbelief tests belief, within us.

Unlike many today, however, West is not interested in developing either a neosectarian inner dialogue under the steeple or a new Christian nationalism. In his address, as well as in his years of teaching, he takes up issues in philosophy, physics, and non-Western ethics, and he points ever toward the *æcumene*, for it is "a sense for certain common problems" that forms "the themes of Christian ethics as a missionary and ecumenical discipline for our time."¹⁸

I fully agree, and it would surely be enough to try to carry this rich legacy into the future. But this legacy and the longer tradition behind it demand that each generation also seek to discern the emerging issues, for ethics always seeks to participate in and offer guidance to what is not yet fully the case. It seeks to discern what God's law and purpose are as they appear in the midst of life, and to equip the peoples of God to be agents of God's righteousness and promise in it. What then, today, are the new arenas wherein the vocation of

¹⁶ Ibid., 23.

¹⁷ Ibid., 22.

¹⁸ Ibid., 31.

Christian Ethics must find its way? The challenges are in two areas: in the nature and character of ethics itself and in its relationship to the changing character of society as we face a new century.

II. AN APOLOGIA FOR THEOLOGICAL ETHICS

One basic challenge is whether normative thinking of any kind, and of theological ethics specifically, is even possible. Any pastor or teacher today must face the fact that many doubt it makes sense to speak about how we ought to live. Current modes of thought (some modern, many anti-, pre-, or postmodern) say that Christian Ethics is little more than the emotive ejaculations of subjective responses,¹⁹ the expression of sociocultural interests,²⁰ the social construction of the common will,²¹ a bricolage of broken fragments of pragmatic meaning,²² or an artifact of partial but privileged and totalizing perspectives.²³

In contrast, Gertrude Himmelfarb argues that these modes of discourse are false prophecy that bear in them the seeds of terror and the abyss.²⁴ For the most part, I agree with her. Yet, these voices get a hearing because they have one valid point, as we shall see. Nevertheless, I disagree with those who delight in the rise to prominence of these positions. It is a perilous shortcut for pastors and teachers to suggest we do not have to offer a justification for the faith within us, and thus to take easy comfort in the claim that it is impossible to do so anyway.

To believe our faith is entirely self-authenticating, but only accessible to those who already belong to our community of faith, is to close piety in on itself. It voids faith of its missiological, dialogical, apologetic, and social-ethical roles. This is the stuff of arbitrary and anti-intellectual fideism. It

¹⁹ This tradition from Hume to Carnap, Ayer and Stevenson sees conative-emotional dispositions as the chief feature of moral life. Ethics, thus, is essentially about loyalties, preferences, and prejudices, which may clash, but about which there are no convincing arguments, measures, or standards.

²⁰ This is a central theme in liberation ethics, as we see, for example, in Ismael García, *Justice in Latin American Theology of Liberation* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987). He treats Assmann, Bonino, Gutiérrez, and Miranda.

²¹ This is the classical tradition of Rousseau, currently revitalized by a number of communitarians from Alan Wolfe, *Whose Keeper?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) to Robert Bellah et al., *The Good Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

²² See Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics After Babel* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988).

²³ Jean-François Lyotard, "The Other's Rights," in *On Human Rights: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1993*, ed. Stephen Shute and Susan Hurley (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 135-47.

²⁴ Gertrude Himmelfarb, *On Looking into the Abyss: Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994).

worships a very small and unreasonable God and thus discredits theology, for it quickly justifies the opinionated fanatic.²⁵

Such views give free reign to Nietzsche's nihilism as it is mediated to us on the feathery wings of literary criticism by the heirs of Heidegger,²⁶ on the racks of inquisitorial philosophy by the disciples of MacIntyre, on the contemptuous hostility to science among the students of Leo Strauss, and on the blade of slashing postmodern theology among the admirers of John Milbank. They distort the minds of many with the notion that both substantive reason and purposeful will have been destroyed in and by modernity, leaving only instrumental rationalism. They tutor us to hate contemporary life and the institutions that make it possible.

What gives these disparate modes of analysis credibility and commonality is that they see, accurately, a substantive error in Enlightenment claims about the capacity and likelihood of the rational, autonomous self to chose an ethic capable of guiding civilization.²⁷ They then use that error to expose all the many moral difficulties of modern life with its presumed new terrors. Thus, they throw up their hands and flee to the comforts of Aristotle or of Rousseau or of Hegel, as if the first did not support imperialism, the second the guillotine, and the third both the Prussian state and, upside down, the Soviet one.

Ironically, however, they assume that the Enlightenment was accurate in stating its own presumption that it could and did offer a grounding for the

²⁵ See Stanley Hauerwas, *Dispatches from the Front* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994). He claims to be "engaging the secular"—an activity in which he is not a pacifist. Written from the standpoint of a self-styled "fanatic" (p. 5), it is an all-out attack on contemporary culture and society as if God had no providential role in them, Christ has not in any way redeemed them, the Holy Spirit does not blow where it will in them, and the history of the church has not influenced them in any positive way.

²⁶ Nearly every faculty today has at least one member who playfully does rhetorical analysis, often superficially dancing from theme to theme with a deconstructive intent but without engaging the substance of any argument.

²⁷ In fact there seem to have been several "Enlightenments," just as there are several forms of Christianity. They do not all cohere, nor do they all challenge or oppose theology. In this connection, John Stewart has called my attention to a remarkable historical study that shows that some forms of the Enlightenment were not only compatible with Christian theology, but were manifestations of it. See Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974). At the same time, one can also argue that many Enlightenment schools of thought were wrong about one major point generally and mistakenly accepted by nearly all postmodern critics. This is the view that secularization involves a gradual religious decline and inevitably accompanies modernization, that leading institutions will become increasingly differentiated from religious ones and thus less influenced by religious orientations and attitudes, and that religion will become little more than a private preference. All these assumptions are now under deep suspicion, as José Casanova has recently argued in *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

rational self and the rational state purely on the basis of the rational will alone. It is more likely, however, that reason, freedom, and the very notion of the self itself were rooted in something other than what the Enlightenment philosophers said they were—that they were more grounded in the theological tradition, less individualistic and less autonomous than they wanted to acknowledge. In addition, it is quite likely that a more accurate view of science, technology, and social theory would demand a partly affirmative and less negative evaluation of their merits than these critics offer.²⁸ It is very difficult to see the fruits of the Enlightenment as the cause of all our ills or the source of all our alienations when in fact the critics of modernity depend and delight in them more than they admit.

The basic issues, of course, are not brand new, but it is necessary in our day, in the face of these critics, to identify what is perilous in both the secular understanding of modernity and in contemporary repudiations of it. Drawing on the biblical witness as it was interpreted for the sake of ethical discernment from Augustine through Luther and Kierkegaard, Reinhold Niebuhr anticipated at least some of the objections to what we presently confront. He too had a quarrel with aspects of the Enlightenment as it appeared in European philosophy, as well as with the theological tendencies in the Social Gospel and the pragmatic trends in secular intellectual life. We may well have to revise some of his views, but he saw that the central issues of theological ethics had to be fought after Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Darwin on anthropological grounds.

In *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, he set forth an analysis of human consciousness as it guides our action.²⁹ He points out that humans have both a freedom and a sense of order, the latter inducing a proclivity to assess the use

²⁸ In this area, especially regarding the natural sciences, I am grateful for the work of my colleague J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, e.g., "Is the Postmodernist Always a Postfoundationalist? *Theology Today* 50 (October 1993): 373–86. Indeed, it could be that certain aspects of the contemporary epistemology of science reflect the actualization of certain ethical absolutes. The question needs to be engaged, at least, as to whether science, as it understands itself today, does not require a foundationalist ethic. While repudiating a foundationalist epistemology, it seeks an intersubjective consensus (no longer "indubitable" certainties). But to find this, it may well be "necessary" that the scientific community be governed by the ethical principle that each will attempt to tell the truth as best as one can discern it, accept the valid evidence and reasonable argument of an opponent, and not use violence or extrinsic authority to substantiate a claim.

²⁹ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939–41). His wife and companion in thought, Ursula Niebuhr, recently told me that for two decades he carried two volumes so often when he traveled that they completely fell into tatters. They were: C. N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938) and E. Pryzwara, ed., *An Augustine Synthesis* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1940).

of freedom. The capacity for freedom is a key indicator of what it means to be human. But we are not only free, nor is the will bound only by the leash of nature or the bonds of society. Nor is freedom from these the chief end of life. The Dionysian violating the Apollonian order, the romantic asserting the vital against everything formal, the existentialist resisting every structure, the expressionist projecting wild fantasies onto the cosmos, and the liberationist demanding the destruction of all hierarchy, all well before the postmodernist decided to deconstruct every hint of a master narrative—they knew that we can reflect on our freedom and speak of greater or lesser authenticity in the exercise of it. Freedom is evidently sufficiently reasonable that people can write long books about it.

Thus, in the very variety and subjectivity of consciousness that appear in the repudiation of all heteronomous or hegemonic moralism, we discover also a tendency to evaluate, to estimate, to weigh, and to assess. And we discover a capacity to speak about these things in a way that we expect others to understand. If we are honest in our freedom, and think we ought to be honest in our freedom, we discover that freedom has a structure that demands honesty. We live with an unavoidable inclination to be judge and jury in regard to our freedom; we cross-examine it and find that it is framed by internal moral structures that demand acknowledgement of limits and purposes that are greater than it, itself, can supply. We choose; and we judge our choices. The law, to be freely obeyed, has indeed been written on our hearts.

Niebuhr points to these common realities and thus points to moral phenomena that are generically human. To be sure, he did not always stress, as we must more emphatically, the ways in which key features of consciousness are variously influenced by socially and culturally influenced patterns of guilt or shame. Behind the variety, however, inevitable processes of decision and assessment make ethics a distinctive human practice—along with art, cooking, initiation of the young, burial of the dead, history recording, law making, and worship.³⁰

³⁰ In fact, the latter combines and is the culmination of the others: The liturgical arts commemorate sacred history and the *rites de passage* and are governed by the *lex orandi*. We use both doctrinal history and systematic thought to assess and guide these practices (are they faithful? are they true?). Most notable for our purposes today, we also use ethics to evaluate our history and the modes of our critical assessment. Thus, we ask: Is what they say morally right? What good do they serve? How do they fit our actual situation? The fact that worship, history, and theology now have to offer an ethical apology for what they do is one of the striking features of modernity, for it implies that religion, the development of dogma, and systematic thinking are not fully self-authenticating and can be subjected to moral criteria.

These practices reveal something of the core of our humanity that makes us more than the beasts; but we also soon discover that we are less than the angels. Presumably, the angels know what is right and what is good and what is fitting quite completely—even if some of them rebel, fleeing the truth they know for the sake of an unbounded freedom they want to have. This is the source of demonic powers in our midst. It is not necessary to be an angelologist to be an ethicist, but it helps. The issues of ethics stand on the brink of holiness—and hellishness.

Ethics, however, seldom becomes mystical. Not that ethics is secular; it is simply responsible for the mundane. It wants to know what the practice of piety, the appeal to holy writ, and the critical examination of these by the historical and systematic sciences mean for guiding life. And in raising these questions, ethics interminably translates the questions into debates about the relative importance of deontology, teleology, and ethology, and draws liturgy, scripture, and doctrine into these debates, for this ethical trinity identifies how humans distinguish the divine from the devilish in the midst of existence, and ethics wants to know what the other theological disciplines contribute to that discernment.

In these arguments, ethics seeks to clarify the first principles of right and wrong; to envision, prioritize, and actualize the greatest possible good as well as learn how to avoid evil; and to identify the operational values and virtues that sustain responsible existence. These three analytically distinct modes of moral discourse both point toward what is holy and indicate how we are to live if we acknowledge The Holy. Ethics is the this-sidedness of holiness. It is what leads contemporary humanity to something like the first sentence of Calvin's *Institutes*: "Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves." It also confirms the second: "But, while joined by many bonds, which one precedes and brings forth the other is not easy to discern."³¹

Niebuhr held the most important contribution Christianity made to ethics was that its theological account of human moral experience is able, and can be shown to be able, to articulate the realities that distinguish the divine and the devilish more accurately than the best moral and philosophical traditions of

³¹ Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill, 2 vols., The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1:35 (1.1.1). Ethics, thus, properly belongs in a department where it is forced to dialogue with philosophers such as Diogenes Allen, for both philosophical and transcendental theological arguments are necessary to it.

Athens or of Berlin.³² We must today also inquire whether it is able to discern them more acutely than Mecca and Benares, the great world centers of devotion to literalist revelationism and to primal spiritualities.³³ What is revealed in this theological account is the postulate that humans are not only minds and bodies joined into selves or ensembles of social relations but souls made in the image of God. However quaint the term may sound to modernist theorists of personality, the soul is the seat both of freedom, which we call "will," and of the capacity to assess, which we call "conscience." It is constituted by a *justitia originalis*. The *pietas* of will and the *intellectus* of judgment are given in common grace to each in the *imago dei*. The core of human existence is conferred, not innate; it is relational and, thus, neither socially constructed nor autonomous. It is soul, not self, and it is not reducible to mind or body or social history or to any of them in combination.

The human soul, however, soon discovers that its own powers of will and conscience can neither put the ethical parts together to secure the holiness it seeks nor hold body and mind together in the midst of social history. It cannot do so for its powers are derivative and limited. The fact of limitation does not void the soul, destroy the fact of freedom, or efface the capacity to evaluate. Each person remains a center of dignity to be honored and respected.³⁴ But the limitations make the integration of the right, the good, and the fitting impossible on the soul's terms alone. We cannot love and we cannot attain justice unless we are loved and justified by that which is truly holy.³⁵

³² I use this metaphor for classical and modern philosophy because David Kelsey has recently used it in seeking to speak of approaches to theological education (see his *Between Athens and Berlin* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993]). However, his irrational commitment to narrative relativism makes him unable to take seriously modes of reasonable theological discourse that point toward greater ethical universality and comprehend the Greeks and the Germans, and many others, as the classic conciliar and covenantal traditions did, for example, in Nicea, Rome, Geneva, Westminster, and Madras.

³³ See M. L. Stackhouse and S. Healey, "Religion and Human Rights: A Theological Apologetic," in *Religious Human Rights*, ed. John Witte et al. (Amsterdam: Martinus Nijhoff Press, forthcoming).

³⁴ The *imago dei* makes the self more real, relational, and inviolable than anything people innately "arc," "have," or "construct." It is the deepest basis of morality and human rights. The best recent philosophical defense of this point is: A. W. Musschenga et al., *Mortality, Worldview, and Law: The Idea of a Universal Morality and Its Critics* (Maastricht, Holland: Van Gorcum, 1992). Cf. Selya Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1992); and Arthur J. Dyck, *Rethinking Rights and Responsibilities: The Moral Bonds of Community* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1994).

³⁵ Niebuhr, following Augustine, treated this deep corruption in terms of the sin of pride, the overbearing self-celebration of the soul seeking to assert its own powers. Since he wrote, feminist ethicists have argued that pride is more characteristic of males than of females, and that the inability of women to assert themselves as moral agents with confidence is the more frequent corruption for them. The point is well taken. Different groups in various social locations are beset by distinctive temptations, as well as bear particular gifts. Yet all are

The ethical power of Christianity is, at this point, based in the affirmation that Jesus Christ is the ontological embodiment of the loving and justifying relationship between God and humanity, the One whose life, death, and resurrection are the primary historical evidence that we are loved and justified. Thus, in Jesus Christ, we find a direct, personal relationship between the divine and the human whereby the triune reality of God reaches beyond God's internal existence and overcomes the distance between the divine and the human. Thereby, the material, psychological, social, and political realities of human existence are empowered toward the integration of ethical possibilities. This embodying event gracefully invites the fragile, easily distorted, subjective, and suspicious person to believe that our existence is covenantal in character, even given the ambiguities of warranted historical evidence. This vertical-intersubjective relationship thereby prompts and enables us to seek the formation of those relative covenants of justice and love possible in historical relationships that they may become channels of grace in the horizontal-intersubjective relationships of life, both in the church and in the fabric of civilization, as we shall see. Indeed, they are to society as the soul is to the self.³⁶

This is the deeper, the central insight. Not only are self and civilization not autonomous, the soul is not either. And it is not, for one simple reason: For all its will and its capacity to judge, it has only genitive status. The *imago* that constitutes the soul is *dei*, "of God," but it is not God, a piece of God, or divine in itself. The will that we exercise in our own freedom is the freedom bestowed by God, and the capacity to judge is a function of the laws and purposes of God. These become full and complete in God and only by God, and the proximate possibilities of these are present only insofar as God is present in the midst of humanity.³⁷ This we do not know with absolute

plagued by the fact that the moral life is not and cannot be fully achieved within the self or even within "natural" groups.

³⁶ My colleagues Mark McClain-Taylor, Bruce McCormack, and Paul Rorem have invited me to spell out this dimension of my argument further, and I shall have to do so in the context of Princeton in ways I have not yet done. Certain previous efforts, however, point in this direction, and I presuppose them in this statement. See especially my "The Trinity as Public Theology," in *Faith to Creed*, ed. M. Heim (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 162-97.

³⁷ It is this genitive or derivative, rather than nominative and self-sufficient, character of the soul that divides this point of view from both the Enlightenment and its voluntaristic twin, Romanticism. They each attempted to substitute a theory of "nous," or a socially decided "ego," for the *imago dei*. If, however, the *imago dei* is recognized, much that has been discovered by modernity about human reason and the social construction of self, and their anticipations in *ruach* or *psychē*, can be examined and endorsed by theological ethics. After all, this is the deep ground that gave rise to the modern modes of inquiry into the "personality" and sustains these possibilities today.

certainty. This we believe; but it is a reasonable belief in the sense that every other option gives a less coherent account and leads more dramatically to injustice or the incapacity to comprehend covenants of love.³⁸

For example, if there is no God and thus no *imago*, if the modern Cartesian withdrawal into the self reveals no soul and no necessity for a relationship to anything beyond ourselves, we may have to say that the ancient Buddhists were correct. They had a more profound understanding of the self as a constructed temporal occasion that gained a temporary radical autonomy subject to rational-voluntary deconstruction than modernity has yet imagined. Gautama's analysis led him to the ecstatic conviction that there is no soul, no God, and thus no necessary relationship, no attachment, and no "feeling of absolute dependence" that could not be overcome. In fact, he taught that holding to these was the cause of evil.

It turns out that Descartes started modernity on a similar path; but he discovered an "I" able to doubt, and thus able to think, choose, judge, and believe. What he found is what Christianity already knew; but his method could not find its ground. Unscientifically, he had ruled it out with his hermeneutic of suspicion. Insofar as contemporary postmodernists press the Cartesian move to its extreme, and become ecstatic about it, they are ideological Buddhists who live a lie when they refuse to accept the ascetic, celibate, detached ethic logically entailed.³⁹

I mention this because it reminds us of critical issues in our heritage, because it allows us to begin to recognize that the religions and philosophies of the world are not entirely inaccessible or even foreign to us (or ours to others), and because we can no longer avoid the interfaith dialogue even if we hold, as Augustine taught, that a primary implication of the biblical tradition and of Western philosophy entails a convergent focus on the nature and character of the soul in its relationship to God.

This argument has three implications. One is directly ethical. The second is

³⁸ That, at least, is the implication of the most extensive comparative work I have yet been able to undertake on this question. See my "The World's Religions and Political Democracy: Some Comparative Reflections," *Religion and Society* (India) 29, no. 4 (December 1982): 19-49; and *Creeds, Society and Human Rights: A Study in Three Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985).

³⁹ I dare not pause to treat here what I shall take up later, the idea that a theological ethic must not only be able to account for and guide the soul but must also be able to guide civilizations. On this point, Buddhism appears to be almost entirely dependent on the *Arthashastra* of Hinduism (in Theravada) or on Confucian theories (in Mahayana), although this point is disputed. In either case, it is highly probable that the "ethic of compassion" is, in Buddhism, as much a highly secondary and provisional strategy as an ultimate condition, principle, or goal. I am indebted to the Harvard scholar of Buddhism, Christopher Terrien-Queen, for guidance on these matters.

epistemic, and the third is ontological. They all bear on the ethical. The first tells us why Christianity worships an ethical God and yet is not and can never become an orthopraxis. Everything in Christianity drives us toward an ethic of love and justice, which are both relational, yet no specific human action is and can be required, for none can accomplish the perfect integration of what is only divine. This does not cancel the principles of negative limit—idolatry, blasphemy, murder, rape, stealing, lying, adultery, and covetousness are wrong.⁴⁰ They tell us all what boundaries ought not to be trespassed, but they do not tell us what to do. Similarly, loving God and the neighbor by seeking his or her good points us toward godly purposes;⁴¹ but that does not tell us what actual steps to take. Nevertheless, such proscriptions and prescriptions are so definite that we can say they are absolute. They defy every effort to dissolve them in the changing tides of history and circumstance, and we are ever called upon to incarnate them responsibly in the multiple and changing contexts of life. But none of them tells us, exactly, what to do. The reality of absolutes does not alleviate the need for discernment, choice, decision, or judgment. Works cannot justify us, but faith without works is dead.

We can, and we must, constantly construct and revise the codes and mission statements, the axioms, the proverbs and guidelines, the politics and policies, the customs and manners, the habits and priorities of individuals, the contractual agreements, the constitutions, and the international pacts that support angelic potentialities and limit demonic ones.⁴² These are the ways that holiness becomes relatively embodied in the covenants of love and justice in life. But these are not absolute; they are themselves judged by a complex blend of voluntary decision, historic memory, and critical reflection on that which is more nearly ultimate. The work of ethics at this level is never done; the introductory course has to be taught every year; the sermons of moral admonition, of pastoral instruction, of ethical discernment, and of prophetic judgment have to be preached to every people in every season. And the bylaws

⁴⁰ It is the greatest contribution of the Torah, and of the Jewish tradition generally, that they recognize the holiness of righteous law above and beyond the political act of legislation. The law comes down from the mountain, even when it is mediated by great prophets. Christianity is properly bound to this insight, even if it does not take it to be the only one, and becomes antinomian and possibly anti-Semitic in the theological sense if it ignores or repudiates this disclosure of ethical meaning.

⁴¹ The place of honor given by Christian Ethics to the Sermon on the Mount is a way of reordering the laws of God in view of a transformed and transforming ethical vision of the Good. Hence it begins with the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:3) before reasserting the law (Mt. 5:17).

⁴² Indeed, these can also become the basis of jurisprudential theory. See Harold J. Berman, "Toward an Integrative Jurisprudence," in *Faith and Order* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993). There is a very accessible treatment of key themes in his monumental *Law and Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), which helped reestablish the contemporary dialogue between theological ethics and jurisprudence.

of polity have to be revised in every generation. Ethics, like the true church itself is *semper reformans, semper reformanda*, even if its principles are absolute—or rather, because they are absolute yet never fully imminent. The righteousness of the saints in this world is permanently imperfect, but it is always subject to improving transformation, what the classic heritage called “sanctification.” And this fact inevitably connects ethics to practical theology.

The second great learning is epistemic; it points to the insufficiency of moral philosophy, even if it acknowledges its rich and necessary contribution. This, again, is the one valid point the postmodernists have seen: Moral philosophy cannot supply its own ground and becomes pompous, violent, and totalizing when it tries to do so. This is what makes the postmodernists distinct from the premodernists: They know that this applies to the great classical traditions as well as to the Enlightenment and that a simple return to the Mediterranean cannot solve the problems of the Atlantic or of any of the seven seas. However, they never ask the next obvious question: Why does this difficulty appear most acutely when philosophy cuts its ties to religion? The problem here is that postmodernism tends to think of religion as particular and cultural and itself as transcontextual and universal. In fact, only some philosophies point toward the transcontextual, and this is only seen when such a philosophy is allied to a religion that links the truly universal to the particular.

It is true, of course, that some religions try to resist all ties to philosophy, even if it inevitably sneaks in. But others seek companionship with it. They treat philosophy as Hosea treated Gomer, beckoning its wanton, if beautiful and fertile, spirit into an enduring relationship.⁴³ This kind of prophetic religion seeks the *philia*, even the *eros*, of *sophia*, to bring it into accord with the *logos* of *theos*. It does so because theology points toward a foundation that its beloved philosophy cannot discover alone and without which religion is tempted to self-righteousness.

All serious ethics, thus, is finally theological ethics. The flotilla of both classical and Enlightenment philosophy (as well as the romantic drive, against reason, to see all religion and thought as passionate “expression”) floats on a sea of theological assumption. These ships are great human constructions, they carry important goods, they can facilitate intercourse with many peoples in many ports, and they can weather many storms and overreach many deeps that divide. But if that sea dries up, the ships of enlightened discourse and the

⁴³ This is how we can best view Luther’s claim: “Reason is a whore.”

love of human wisdom sink in the muddy sand or wreck on the rocky shoals of chaos.⁴⁴

I have no doubt that we can and must continue to learn from philosophy, but the fact that we must turn to faith at this one critical juncture—as Augustine, Thomas, Luther, Calvin, and Barth knew—does not mean that we can and must make a leap of faith that is contrary to every capacity for evaluation and judgment. The keystone of grace holds little together if it is disconnected from the arch stones of reason, morality, and society.⁴⁵ Instead, we need to argue again what much of the Reformation claimed: The deepest roots of broad and grand moral knowledge are theological, to which particular philosophies and sciences may contribute precisely because they are not

⁴⁴ In suggesting that ethics is fundamentally theological in this way, I am opposing two great tendencies in theology, the front and back of a bad coin. On the one side, some parts of the Roman Catholic tradition, following Aristotle, and some branches of Protestant modernism, following Kant, made a fateful error in teaching that the deepest and broadest base for a common morality is philosophical and that theology is a particular *superadditum* that stands outside or beyond, perhaps above, but functionally beside natural moral knowledge. Theology soon became irrelevant. On the other side, some fideist theologians, holding the same view, cling to the *superadditum* alone and become contemptuous of any apologetic attempt to show that it makes sense, socially, intellectually, or ethically, to believe. In this case, we should follow the course that politics, philosophy, jurisprudence, and the sciences have taken with regard to theology: ignore its claims and control its influence. Reformed Christian Ethics doubts the sufficiency of moral philosophy and repudiates mere fideism. In view of such papal encyclicals as *Centesimus Annis* and *Veritatis Splendor*, Reformed hostility to Rome must also be reduced. The greater threat today is from the other side: The Calvinist response to the spiritual and anabaptist fideists of old was much too harsh, but it rightly discerned a threat to souls and to civilizations if religious irrationality were to become the established view of things. It is not that such faith is *necessarily* wrong or harmful; it is simply that on its own grounds no one could ever tell, and it unwittingly opens the door to magic, superstition, and fanaticism, and soon to the seductive gods of Fortuna, Chance, and Fate, all of which subvert both freedom and reasonable judgment.

⁴⁵ I here resist the temptation to treat one of the great issues of our day: It is a true statement to say that revelation is the basis of ethics, but it is an insufficient one, unless one holds that revelation occurs also in common grace. I may need instruction here from my colleagues Daniel Migliore and Bruce McCormack, but it seems possible to ask whether Barth subverted this point when he claimed that “theology is the work of the church” (*Church Dogmatics* [Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936–62], I/1, p. 4.). That view could swallow common grace into special grace. It may be that a public, world-engaged theology that leads to social ethical mandates is the primal human intellectual undertaking (Gen. 2:19–23), whether participating with God in establishing the identity of the world, speaking to God about the nature of differentiated human relationship, or inquiring in human dialogue as to the nature and character of God. Further, in view of the challenge to Christianity about the nature of revelation from Islam, which has a more “receptionist” and supercessionist “special grace” theory of revelation than Christianity’s, we may have to explain why we should not all become Muslims if all depends on a claim of final special revelation. I have only begun to address that issue. See my “Public Theology and the Future of Democratic Society,” in *The Church’s Public Role*, ed. Dieter T. Hessel (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 62–83.

utterly incompatible with what theology discloses. Indeed, without theology, the philosophies and sciences themselves become irrational and arbitrary.

This matter is epistemic, but it is ontological as well. The human soul is incomplete in its own being. It needs relationship. Above all, it needs a relationship to its source and its norm. We humans are not fulfilled as humans if we are not in relationship to God. Thank God, the ontological question is distinct from the epistemic one, for many are in relationship by the grace of God and do not know it, although it sometimes is troubling that a few seem more certain of their relationship than appears warranted. Nevertheless, when the relationship is acknowledged—which is one of the chief tasks of those ethicists who are on the front lines of human consciousness, the clergy—we become able to admit what is the truth about ourselves: that we are not whole in ourselves, that we require an other, indeed, The Other, The Holy Other, to be whole. It comes as a matter of relief and reconstituting joy to find that we do not have to be whole in ourselves but are in a relationship of and with holiness. Lives change. This ontological reality also makes ethics the constant companion of practical theology.

III. ON THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL THEORY

As the soul requires God, we humans require one another to approximate wholeness on earth. From the very beginning it is said: "It is not good that a human should be alone." If this is true under conditions of innocence, it is more dramatically so under conditions of sin. Thus, we are called into the church as the emblem and guide to the many covenants of life that preserve us and proleptically anticipate the realm to come, the city that has foundations after innocence is lost. Christian Ethics is always also Social Ethics.

This does not mean, as some claim, that Christian Ethics must unambiguously side with the communitarian protest against universalism and individualism.⁴⁶ No soul flourishes without communal support, and no community endures without personal responsibility; but, sadly, much communitarian theory today ignores the decisive ethical issue that stands behind the demand for human rights: the right to convert. When people become aware of a relationship with God, may they leave parents, country, class, clan, national ideology, cultural and religiously defined role or identity, without threat of

⁴⁶ See, for example, the debates on these matters in John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971); Michael J. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Mary Ann Glendon, *Rights Talk* (New York: Free Press, 1992); and Benhabib, *Situating the Self*.

pressure or violence? May they associate, organize, and communicate with others about all the decisive issues of life without penalty?

"Religious freedom" as the basic human right is related to this feature of Christian tradition, and it puts a particular turn on all theories of human relatedness. It claims that the truer sociality is associational rather than communal.⁴⁷ The question, thus, is not whether we shall live in organized relationships, but what kinds of collectivities we shall have, and what shall guide the choice of them, since the ways of combining in relationship are many.

To put it another way, the decisive issue is sociological as it relates to ethics, and as it may both shape and be shaped by theology.⁴⁸ Is there is a normative pattern for associational existence? Does love have a right order and a godly end? Does justice have an ideal form and an ultimate purpose? These are the social correlates of, and the temporal support systems for, the *imago dei*. The moral life of the soul, in other words, not only requires theology; it also requires specification of a *logos* of the *socius*, for covenants of love and justice are, like the *imago*, of God; but they are not God. Thus, it is evidence of ethical wisdom, not of a theological betrayal, that the social sciences, which attempt to explicate the logic, dynamic, and structure of such relationships whenever they are profoundly understood, are today used in the disciplined study of scripture, tradition, and contemporary church and civilizational life.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ See my "Religion, Rights and the Constitution," in *An Unsettled Arena: Religion and the Bill of Rights*, ed. R. C. White and A. G. Zimmermann (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989). One can also point to the fact that Christians are not "born" Christians but become members of the church by baptism. See my "Peace in Church, Family and State: A Reformed View," in *Baptism, Peace and the State in the Reformed and Mennonite Traditions*, ed. R. T. Bender and A. P. F. Sell (Waterloo, Canada: W. Laurier University Press, 1991), 69–86.

⁴⁸ If we use the term "community," as opposed to "association," or to "society," as an association of communities and associations, or even to "civil society," as an association of communities and associations that is formed into a "political society," we tend to trap people in ascriptive cohorts. That is, we tend to group people by race, sex, nation, class, or age—or, as has become common recently, sexual orientation—and this absolutizes biophysical and accidental characteristics of persons. But people do not associate only on these bases, it is condescending to see people only as instances of a group, and it is a lie to think that what people believe derives from their group only. Further, it is a matter of normative ecclesial importance for the Christian church, and, in certain ways, for the "nation" of Islam, the *ashram* of Hinduism, or the *sangam* of Buddhism, that biophysical, racial, and economic conditions are *not* what is most important about persons and that persons *can* transcend these to form more important and more salvific groups decisive for identity and for the common life.

⁴⁹ The most extensive attack on the use of the social sciences by theology is John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990). He argues that the social sciences are all based on either secular reason or pagan assumptions, both of which displace theology and induce violence. However, his reassertion of a hierarchical, sacramental theology governed only by a spontaneous obedience to bishops against all other social, political,

And here we confront several critical questions for the common human future: Are there any perennial and cross-cultural human forms of sociality that we all require? If there are, what are they, and how can a theologically rooted social ethic constrain the repeated impulses to disfigure them? How can they do so in situations where specific and valid values gain compelling force in particular times and places? All these questions lead to the issue of how we shall deploy the resources we have been given to embody our relationship to God in the midst of the relative contexts of life, so that covenants of love and justice are more fully manifest on earth. On both counts, we need to seek out where theology and sociology join, to form a viable social ethic.

In this connection, ecclesiology is decisive. Rightly understood, it is not an adiaphorus question of how best to run things under the steeple; but it is the fundamental issue of how God wants us to order our life together on earth—not to keep us unsullied from the world but to guide and form the basic institutions of human existence so that life at its deepest may flourish. It is the demonstration of how to integrate theology and sociology into covenantal associations of the relative love and justice possible under conditions of sin.⁵⁰

From at least the pastoral epistles on, Christians have recognized that it was necessary to have a way to conceive of how to live in society, and they (like the members of every other great religious movement) could not imagine ordering their lives without reshaping the ordinary structures of human existence according to the primary insights of faith.⁵¹ The Hebrew scriptures provided much guidance of course, but when the identity of the chosen people

economic, and intellectual possibilities is both arbitrary and disobedient to the God who loves the world and calls us to serve God in it.

⁵⁰ Ernst Troeltsch's *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (New York: Harper & Row, 1934; German original, 1911) deeply and positively influenced many strands of Christian Ethics in this century. Although there were and are many disagreements about his theology, sociology, and historiography, Troeltsch made an enduring contribution when he argued that ecclesiology embodies the ethic of a religious vision, gives rise to a distinctive social form, relates a community of faith to or isolates it from society, and provides an ethical model of the normative shape of society. This influence is decisive for the shape of social history generally. His insight, transmitted by leading ethics teachers of the previous generation—H. Richard Niebuhr of Yale, James Luther Adams of Chicago and Harvard, Reinhold Niebuhr and especially Roger Shinn of Union Seminary, and Walter Muelder of Boston University—must not be lost on the next generation.

⁵¹ This is one of the most important insights of the greatest post-Marxist social theorist, Max Weber. In both his *Economy and Society* and his five volumes on comparative religion, he showed that religion and ethics are not simply a product or function of social forces, although some important influences do flow in that direction, but a primal cause in social history—as Charles Ryerson and other leading interpreters of comparative religions and cultures have also noted. Even where it does not intend to, religion has had a decisive effect

as the children of Abraham and the kingdom of David is opened up, and the disciples of Christ, the household, and Caesar are socially differentiated, matters had to be reconceived.

At this juncture, I appeal to my new colleagues for a dialogue between Christian Ethics and Church History. Ethicists need to learn from those who know periods and regions of Christian history better than they. But historians may need to learn from ethics also, at least how to frame and assess certain normative questions. For one thing, we must recognize that, in the minds of many, biblical and church history is up on a moral charge. It is today widely thought that Christianity is essentially the religion of the Crusades, the witch trials, and the religious wars. Many are convinced that Christianity is the chief source of, or at least a primary legitimizer of, racism, classism, sexism, nationalism, militarism, imperialism, and colonialism. The list is familiar. Some of the charges are ideological and spurious, others may have some weight. For the sake of the faith, our students, and our own consciences, ethicists and historians must sort and weigh the charges.⁵² A major research project may be necessary so that we may accurately defend the faith where appropriate and confess our sins where necessary.

The social dimension of Christian Ethics requires also that, as we face new social issues in the future, we become able to discern how, when, where, and to what degree Christians borrowed, if selectively and contentiously, social practices and theories from the cultures into which Christianity moved, and how, when, where, and to what degree Christians reshaped these in the church and in the world to reform the basic architecture of civilization. It has been, and shall ever be, one of the tasks of Christian Ethics not only to touch the depths of the human soul but also to frame the *oecumene* with institutions that preserve freedom, aid evaluations, and enhance the possibilities of just and loving relationships in the very fabric of civilization.

At its best, Christian Ethics is, if I may borrow Nicholas Wolterstorff's terms, "world formative" and not "world avertive."⁵³ It engages the world for the sake of the transformation of the world, rather than manicuring the psyche for the sake of virtue. The Social Gospel, the Christian Realist, the Civil Rights, and the Liberation Theology movements all shared this insight

on the shape of society by the way its theological ethics selectively appropriates and reshapes the social institutions of society.

⁵² Kathleen E. McVey's inaugural address at Princeton Seminary exemplifies the kinds of issues we need to discuss. See her "Christianity and Culture, Dead White European Males, and the Study of Patristics," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 15 (1994): 103-30.

⁵³ Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985), 4.

in our century. They drew forth from the deeper tradition elements of social ethics that are indispensable for the future, and they faced the challenges of our times with courage. Much the same can be said for the Catholic social encyclicals. Yet, for all their activism and social passion, none has yet produced a durable constructive theory of society for a globalizing world.

There are several reasons for this lack. First, in a century when threats to the moral life were posed by colonialization, Fascism, and Communism abroad and by the routinization, rationalization, and bureaucratization of everything at home, many have felt threatened by institutions and have sought a liminality of personal experience beside them, beyond them, or against them, as my colleagues James Loder, Richard Fenn, Donald Capps, and Mark McClain-Taylor, each in his own way, have taught.

A second reason has a longer history. From the Peace of Westphalia through the unfinished rebuilding of dozens of nations after the end of colonialism, public ethical issues have been deeply identified with the formation and sustaining of the nation-state. Indeed, the social witness of Christian Ethics for several centuries has centered on the ordering of the common life through the agencies of national government. In spite of the dangers of chauvinism or baptized patriotism, thousands, perhaps millions, of Christians identify social responsibility with, as Devanandan and Thomas put it a generation ago, "Christian Participation in Nation Building."⁵⁴ Today, several religions are attempting to do what Christianity tried to do, as we see in resurgent Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist nationalist movements.⁵⁵

While responsible political engagement at the level of the nation-state remains important, and we will face grave dangers if we do not cultivate a political ethic at that level, the issues facing us today reach beyond and relativize that horizon. The reason is that the nation-state is no longer the

⁵⁴ P. D. Devanandan and M. M. Thomas, *Christian Participation in Nation Building* (Bangalore: CISRS, 1960). This theme continues today with numerous contextual variations. See Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-Building and Human Rights* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Ng Kam Weng, *Bridge-Building in a Pluralistic Society* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka SUFES, 1994).

⁵⁵ See Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). Lee H. Yearley, author of *Mencius and Aquinas: Theories of Virtue and Conceptions of Courage* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), pointed out at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, 1994, that the People's Republic of China has made the study of Confucianism a high priority in education, for it perceives a need to restore an ethical fabric to the society. In several "Memorials" and in the funding of some two thousand research and teaching projects, it is posing this as a way of resisting both the temptations of individualistic capitalism and of (clan-based) mercantilism, and the growth of Christianity.

overarching and governing unit of power or identity or influence in the modern world. The globalization of the economy, science, technology, media, communication, finance, fashion, and of medical, nuclear, and ecological threat have made the nation-state a ganglion in the nervous system of the body politic, not the comprehending head of the whole. A different kind of public is emerging in our midst, one no longer defined by or confined to any republic. Indeed, we may also note that all the churches defined by national boundaries are in decline.

Civil society has escaped the artifices of earlier religio-political boundaries; it no longer coincides with specific governmental organs any more than state governments defined political reality after the federal Constitution was formed. To be sure, society has not yet established a "new world order," but the compassionate technocrats of the left, who want to nationalize solutions to all social problems, and the romantic nationalists of the right, who want above all to protect national sovereignty or cultural identity, and call it holy, have become the twin reactionaries of our times, standing against the cosmopolitan civilization taking shape before our very eyes. They disarm the people from facing the chief moral issues of our common future.

There is a postmodernism that is broadly valid, beyond the one epistemic point mentioned earlier; but it is found in the direction of those who can see the possibilities of God's promise and the call to new ministries in the intercultural catholicity of an emerging world society. To be sure, ambiguity, perils, possibilities of exploitation, dangers of imperialism, and temptations to polytheism, syncretism, and monism reside on that path; but there is a postmodernism that does not only look back, carping at modernity while keeping its shards as their point of reference. Rather, there is the future-oriented, world-wide opportunity to discover in what is already common practice in the deeper intercontextual interactions and between the multiple contexts of life, and to test whether they reveal to us the deeper and perennial patterns of existence behind the fault lines that divide. This postmodernism grows out of and transcends modernity; it does not simply repudiate and wallow in the illusion of its ruins.

We can get over postmodernism in the negative sense. It is curable and not terminal. But we are unlikely to be able to get over globalization. Nor should we. We at least have to ask whether we have been enabled to understand more existentially in our time what the authors of the first book of the Bible were inspired to teach and the author of the last one was inspired to see: that the world is one and bound to a common cosmos, history, and destiny, in spite of the conflict, division, rebellion, and deception. Thanks be to God for those

who fought, and still fight, the contextualist idolatries and the localistic insularities of our days, for now we glimpse a wider world.⁵⁶

This future, however, is still only a wax model. It has no definitive moral and spiritual shape. It has few universally accepted norms, although the principles of human rights are more widely embodied in the constitutions of the peoples of the world, and possibly more widely observed in practice, than at any time in human history. But the expanding adoption of technology, media, science, corporate capitalism, and constitutional democracy everywhere has no overt or singular vision about its purpose or agreement about its possible ultimate destiny. On this point, the future is scarcely discussed, although we know that the Nirvana of the Buddhist is not the same as the Perfect Classless Society of the Marxist, the Paradise of the Muslim, or the spiritual absorption of the soul into the Divine Oversoul of the Hindu, the Sufi, and the Theosophist. None of these is identical with the New Jerusalem.

All these developments put an enormous pressure on local populations. Many will be unprepared and swamped by them. Those least alert to the developments will be the more deeply wounded by them, and those most resistant to them will be the most crushed by them. Who shall interpret the signs of the times to the people, and who will equip them to read their various contexts and build links to the whole? The strategy of the previous generation, to engage in and celebrate resistance, proved to be reactionary and to perpetuate powerlessness. A new, more genuinely "progressive" strategy is required. Who will call the people to identify the first principles of right and the deepest visions of the good and to use these resources to shape and modulate these forces toward love and justice, if it is not the clergy of this generation?

Many interpretations of these developments now exist, of course, and I do not here discuss what I think are the best options.⁵⁷ But I can ask whether it is not necessary for a Reformed and ecumenical Christianity to engage the new

⁵⁶ It is surely true that everyone sees the world from a particular place; but some hills are higher than others, and from some vantage points one can see many people viewing many hills. Indeed, it is possible to map the vantage points and the relative comprehensibility of the perspectives. This is the significance of Sinai and of Calvary—as contended by the yogis in the Himalayas, the priests of Mt. Fuji, and the medicine men of Mt. Kenya. It is also the significance of the famous Jain story about the blind men viewing the elephant—he who tells the story knows that it is an elephant and that the blind give only a partial account.

⁵⁷ I have tried to do so elsewhere. See my report, with Charles West et al., *Globalization in Theological Education* (Pew Charitable Trusts, 1993); and two forthcoming essays: "Beneath and Beyond the State: Social, Global and Religious Changes That Shape Welfare Reform," in *Public Justice and Welfare Reform*, ed. J. Skillen and S. Carlson-Thies (Washington: Center for Public Justice); "Christianity and the Prospects for a Global Constitutional Order," in *The Constitution of International Society*, ed. T. Nardin and D. Mapel (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

global civilization on the horizon as it once engaged the Greco-Roman world, later engaged the emerging cities of Europe, and still later the New World of the Americas, at each moment also living with and among the people, preaching, teaching, guiding them to become engaged in the inevitable process of selective embrace and selective rejection, simultaneous reception and reformation of the options at hand.

This civilization will be shaped in both its macrostructure and its microstructures by one or another form of religious ethic, for human nature is as ineradicably theological as it is social. It behooves us to say why, if we decline the challenge, we think Christianity cannot or ought not accept the challenge of our time. Of course, if we do accept it, we will have to learn all we can from past efforts and make every effort to avoid the perils of our past; and we shall have to engage a decidedly multicultural, religiously pluralistic, partially pagan or secular environment with which we do not know how to communicate well. Such obstacles have not stopped believers before.⁵⁸

But if one great challenge faces social ethics in its ministry to the now-differentiated kingdoms of the world, one other challenge may prove equally as difficult. On this point, we return to a distinction of earth-shaking proportions, made in the New Testament and now working itself out in a new way: the distinction of church from kinship and from regime. The *ekklēsia* is neither *oikos* nor *polis*; its *koinōnia* is neither that of *ethnē* or *basileia*, although relations between them remain, and the ethics of the church was decisive in shaping family and political life. This is the basis for the understanding of the “estates” of the medieval world and for the reformers’ understanding of the “orders of creation.” All treated family, church, and government, and often failed to treat economy, media, law, medicine, education, and technology as distinct spheres, for these were presumed to be subordinate to the “estates.” This basic model governed most of the social, political, and legal theories that have been adopted or adapted by theology’s attempt to shape the architecture of the common life.

But in our century, obscured by wars and ideologies, these distinct spheres have emerged from their subordinate status and begun to define the basic contours of the next century. The dramatic changes in the area of global interaction can be seen, in large measure, in the relationship of *ekklēsia* to *oikos*

⁵⁸ The pressures to assume this challenge are especially sharp on the West, for it wields enormous power by its wealth and might. If the principles that guide it are not theologically rooted, not valid or not just, the damage that will be done will have little constraint. For this reason, among others, the West must eagerly develop those multilateral and international networks of mutual accountability that can mitigate what will surely be a great temptation to demonic hegemony.

on the one side and the relationship of both to *polis* on the other. This is because *oikos*, and sometimes its expanded form of *ethnē* (clan, tribe, race), was the basis of *oikonomia*. The household (as *familia*, *latifundium*, *fief*, *Hof*, *hacienda*, yeoman free-hold, or manor) for most of human history was the center of both production and reproduction, both distribution and consumption.⁵⁹

One of the most remarkable legacies of modernity is that this "order of creation," partly under theological influence, differentiated into an increasingly nuclear, often serial or even modular, family, as the center of reproduction and consumption, and the corporation, which became the social organizer of production and distribution. The corporation, indeed, expanded its role so that it became the primary institution also for the organization of educational resources, artistic creation, medical care, legal services, and technological capability—beyond the goods and services that we often think of as "economic" commodities. We are in the process of moving, for profound theological reasons, from "particular brotherhood" to "universal otherhood" on the basis of new kinds of associations, as Benjamin Nelson has shown.⁶⁰

Of course there has been political resistance to these developments, and it could be argued that both National Socialism and Proletarian Socialism had as their chief agenda the control of these areas. Even in democratic politics, what often defines the difference between the left and the right in current disputes is that the left tends to approve the use of political power to control corporations and the processes of production and distribution, while seeking maximum freedom from intervention in issues of reproduction and sexuality. In contrast, the right tends to approve the use of political power to control family-life decisions about processes of reproduction and sexuality, while seeking maximum freedom from intervention on matters of economic production and consumption.

In the contemporary world, however, both positions are doomed, and political discourse focused around the issues in this mold can only be fragmentary occasions for venting hostility, as is presently too often the case.

⁵⁹ It is a serious error in my judgment to see all this as a product of "the market" or of the "logic of late capitalism," for the market is only able to function on the scale that it presently does when extensive ethical, social, and legal institutions are established and multiple economic associations are formed to produce and trade in it. Ethics is better served by a social theory of the economy than by an economic theory of the society, if it is to grasp what is the case and to know how to shape what might be.

⁶⁰ Benjamin Nelson, *The Idea of Usury*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969). Cf. Edmund Leites, "... On Ben Nelson," *Social Research*, 61, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 955–65.

The reason is this: Political power has never been able fully to control either of these areas, for politics cannot generate either the next generation or viable economic institutions. Further, its capacity to guide and constrain these issues is increasingly reduced today, a fact that demands recalibration of both a "mixed" economy and of "family" and welfare policies. Government today can only help set the conditions in which the institutions that do these things can flourish.

At the same time, the public debate about the nature of the political order has escaped the control of all parties, as they seek to accumulate and exercise power, and of government itself. Paralleling the differentiation of *oikos* into distinct familial and economic institutions, the *archai* and *exousiai* are not concentrated only in the *basileia* of government but proliferate into a plurality of institutions and a plethora of media images. Especially important is the peculiar power of electronic *technē* as it emanates from centers of cultural creativity that government cannot, and ought not, control. It has its own impact on the *polis*. The locus and character of public discourse is differentiated from politically accountable institutions. We have seen how TV brought Vietnam to our living rooms; radio broadcasts brought international news into closed societies; the youth of Asia and Africa are redefining their future (to the chagrin of the elders) by their attraction to film, rock, rap, and pop; the tape recorder brought the Ayatollah's revolution from exile back to Iran; and, now, candidates and proponents of programs both fight for sound bites on MTV.⁶¹ These carry value-laden interpretations and perspectives on life that politics cannot control, just as it cannot control family and economic life. Under present conditions, politics is less able than we thought to make people love or care, work or share.

Of course, it will be necessary that, in many circumstances, we must invoke political power to constrain the gross abuses of Baal and Mammon, Mars and Whirl. Nothing can absolve us from responsible politics, which inevitably involves the use of coercive power. But more of the moral constraint and reformation of the powers that these newer differentiations of spheres represent will have to be done from the inside-out than from the top-down, or from, as the radical dream of the last century and of the 1960s had it, the bottom-up—as if, once we removed the constraints of bourgeois values and the prejudicial dogmas of religion, naturally pure human impulses would create a

⁶¹ The power of the popular media in forming values and the quality of values presently being formed are examined by Martha Bayles, *Hole in Our Soul: The Loss of Beauty and Meaning in American Popular Music* (New York: Free Press, 1994).

just society and virtue would emerge from the untutored and unbiased will of the people.

We are in a situation comparable to that of the church in early Christianity, the Reformation, the American frontier, and the missionary expansion. We have to help form, and sometimes reform, *oikos* as family, but today also help form and reform *oikonomia* as world-wide economy. And we have to recognize that their interaction, in new ways, requires recasting historical patterns if loving and just life is to flourish. Similarly, we have to influence today *basileia* and, thus, not only governmental polity and policy, but also the *technē* of the production and consumption of cultural images. This we have to do directly by the way we preach, teach, guide, persuade, counsel, and inspire the people—those who generate and those who consume the fruits of these endeavors. We have now had several generations of hard debate about how the state must guide our lives and control the evils of lucre and lust, violence and domination, ironically precisely as we fought tyrannies of the right and left. The latter struggles were victorious; but the former ones have proven more difficult. The results are quite modest, and the means are widely disputed where they are not rejected. Without the inside-out, the top-down is only heteronomous manipulation; without the inside-out, the bottom-up does not work. And if what is held on the inside is not rooted in valid theological and ethical principles, we simply prepare the people for their own self-destruction.

However, all those who assume the ministries from the inside-out know that they require a constitution of exterior order able to support and sustain, to encourage and not crush, the efforts to form new possibilities from the inside-out. Thus, these efforts must be matched by the cultivation of a transparent architecture of public order that facilitates the transformations that move from the inside-out and evokes the cultivation of “social capital” in and for the complex, multicultural civilization before us.⁶² Christian theological ethics of the future, therefore, will involve an evangelically based relationship of the soul and God, and a reformed and reforming catholicity able to address the widest and deepest structures of the common life. This is where we are most likely to find the genuinely ecumenical possibilities for the future. It will entail both the formation of an inner ethic for the family and the corporation in our day, and engaging the challenge of a just public order beneath and beyond present structures of government that will respect, guide,

⁶² James Coleman has used this term to describe what is involved in structures that sustain relationships of commitment and trust. See *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

and yet relativize the role of the nation-state. This demands a wider engagement by theology in comparative social theory and international jurisprudence and cross-cultural engagements with the technologies of cultural expression than is now the case.

In brief, the vocation of Christian Ethics is but one step beyond what it always was. It must understand the social and historical context in which it finds its identity. It must show that it is possible and necessary to engage the ethical task; and it must touch the soul and expose it to its own deepest foundations. Further, it must frame the basic moral vision of and for civilization so that the graceful possibilities of life can be nourished from the inside-out, and the hellish ones can be constrained. It is a pastoral and intellectual vocation that has always been deep, but seldom been so vast. I pray that I, with the help of all of you, can contribute to it—or, better, that I may contribute with you to the resources for the pastors and theologians of the next generation, so that they may in turn equip the people in all the particular contexts of the world to carry out their ministries in their vocations better than I or my field, we and any seminary, can do alone.

An Immanent Transcendence

by CHARLES A. RYERSON III

Charles A. Ryerson III is the Elmer K. and Ethel R. Timby Professor of the History of Religions at Princeton Theological Seminary. A graduate of Oberlin College (A.B.), Union Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and Columbia University (M.Phil. and Ph.D.), he is the author of Encounter in South India and Regionalism and Religion: The Tamil Renaissance and Popular Hinduism. He gave his inaugural lecture in Miller Chapel on March 29, 1995.

I. INTRODUCTION: PRINCETON PROBLEM

I MUST BEGIN by paying tribute to my predecessor in this post, Edward Jurji. He retired two years before I joined the faculty, and so we saw each other infrequently. He and his wife were always unfailingly gracious to me, however, and I still prize my friendship with Mrs. Ruth Jurji. I think Dr. Jurji would be pleased to know there is now another full professor of the history of religions at Princeton Seminary.

There is a story, which could be true, from the famous, or notorious, Columbia University rebellion of 1968. It was a time of turmoil and promise in which I was perhaps too intimately involved. A professor of philosophy was walking down West 113th Street when a young student dashed up to him and informed him there was going to be a “freak-in” at nearby Morningside Park. “A freak-in?” said the puzzled pedant. “I don’t understand what that is.” “Man,” replied the student, “you don’t have to *understand*, just do your thing.” “But, but,” said the muddled mentor, “*understanding is my thing*.”

That’s what being a professor of the history of religions is like. We’re always trying to understand the ununderstandable and to experience what others experience. We sit around the campfires of the world, listening empathetically to the tales being told, but always knowing we’ll never quite get “it”—whatever “it” is. Puzzled, confused, and muddled, we tread onwards, always in search of others’ “Others,” as we ponder our own.

As I reflected on what the topic of this lecture should be, I discovered just how difficult it is to give an inaugural lecture after being sixteen years at the institution where one is being inaugurated! All my students have heard me all too many times, and the faculty and administration have heard me all too much! After much deliberation, it suddenly occurred to me that a topic I had often dealt with in classes had never been published, or even written down, and yet that topic has been a touchstone of my career here at Princeton. I also

realized that few, if any, faculty had ever heard me speak on this particular matter.

Thus, I must begin with two apologies. First, a heartfelt one to any of my students who are here, because they are going to hear something that will probably be familiar to them. Also, I should say to all of you that I have never presented this topic in just one lecture, and so it undoubtedly will be a bit disjointed and definitely will not adequately cover the subject. What it does do, however, is provide a *concrete* example of the type of thing I do, which may be more valuable than speaking theoretically about my task as a historian of religion at a Christian seminary.

First, a word about methodology. In this particular lecture, I will be primarily a phenomenologist of religion. The best brief description of this method is given by a historian of religion, David Kinsley. I apologize for the exclusive language, but the quotation comes from a time before language was an issue:

Any religious phenomenon is also a social, psychological, and historical fact as well . . . because every religious phenomenon is, in the final analysis, also a *human* phenomenon, and the human phenomenon reveals itself in social, psychic, and historic milieus. . . . What is not so obvious, perhaps, is that religious phenomena deserve to be interpreted in religious terms. They deserve to be interpreted for what they pretend to be—that is, manifestations (or revelations) of the sacred. . . . To understand religious things one must acquaint oneself with their context, one must be sensitive to the cultural setting of a given phenomenon. But what is more important, one must seek to discern the visionary aspect of a religious phenomenon. . . . This means going beyond, or behind, the sometimes obvious social, psychic, or economic significance or function of a given phenomenon to grasp what is the thing revealed to religious man, what the phenomenon reveals . . . about that “other” realm of the sacred.¹

In short, this method resists any “reductionism” of the phenomenon to psychological, sociological, or economic factors. These factors can help explain “religious” phenomena or behavior, but they cannot explain them away. Usually, I try to use social theory in any analysis, but one should begin with empathetic description. Most religion scholars take the subject’s view of the “sacred” with utmost seriousness and attempt to view it with imaginative empathy. We are always concerned with human consciousness, with perhaps

¹ David Kinsley, *The Sword and the Flute* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 3-4.

unreachable sentiments. We explore the public expressions of consciousness in and through myth, ritual, symbol, beliefs, ethics, etc. What is key here is that we try to study an *ethos*, private and public.

I stress all this not only because I am in a Christian seminary, which can be challenging for a scholar of religion who sees himself as one who attempts to present religions other than Christianity and methodologies other than ones that are theological. I am also at *Princeton* Seminary where either Barth ("religion is unbelief") or Marx ("religion is the opiate of the people") seems to dominate. Thus, I am either viewed as a hustler of heathenism or as a dealer in drugs! I have always enjoyed Professor Beker's good-humored description of me as the "Professor of Comparative Paganism."

Be that as it may, what I am going to attempt today, all too briefly, is a mainly phenomenological description of an alternate vision of transcendence. By "transcendent vision," I mean that which enables us "to see beyond the immediately sensed world of bits and pieces," that which enables us to have a *cosmos*—a meaningful universe. "Visions explode man out of his bound condition as a purely historical . . . being and enable him to participate in a transcendent realm of 'otherness.'"²

Many scholars of religion, and some in theology, in the past one hundred years have viewed the major world religions as based on two contrasting visions of transcendence. Various names have been applied to this typology: theistic versus nontheistic (Tillich), theocratic versus ontocratic (van Leeuwen), communion versus union, mystical versus numinous (Ninian Smart), unity versus differentiation, identity versus relationship, and mysticism versus propheticism (Heiler). This last is misleading, although it is used by Max Weber. The problem is that Weber correctly realized that mysticism could be prophetic also. It was he who differentiated between the "emissary prophecy" of the "prophetic vision" and the "exemplary prophecy" of the "mystical vision." The sociologist Peter Berger has written rather perceptively on this typology and uses the terms "interiority" versus "confrontation."³

As Berger and others admit, this typology is not adequate. All the major religions have elements of the two types and are mixtures of them, but each of the major religions has an *ethos* that clearly emerges from one or the other vision. A classic example of the "confrontation" type is found in Isaiah 6:1–9. Here, Creator and creature are clearly differentiated, and, when creature is

² Ibid., 4.

³ Peter Berger, ed., *The Other Side of God* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 3–27. See also his *The Heretical Imperative* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1979). Berger writes clearly about the typologies in world religions, but his description of the "interiority" type is cursory and, in my opinion, mistaken.

thrust into the presence of the Holy, it feels its unworthiness, even its guilt and sin. Repentance is followed by forgiveness, and forgiveness is succeeded by action in history, the action of hammering out God's will on the world. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, among the major world religions, all share in this vision and build upon it.

I shall describe the "interiority" vision. It is a form of an "immanent transcendence," transcendent because it relativizes history and nature as surely as does the confrontation vision but does so by discovering the "other" within and in that revelation, realizing that the "within" is one with the "otherness."

Religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism (through the considerable influence of Buddhism), and Jainism are predominantly based on the vision of interiority. Sikhism is probably most at home in this group also, but it has powerful elements of the confrontational within it. Eastern Orthodox Christianity, while predominantly confrontational, can be an important link to the interiority vision.

One must be careful not to view one vision as other-worldly and one as this-worldly. Both visions posit a transcendence "beyond" the phenomenal world, and both can lead the worshiper out of the world. Both can also bring the worshiper back into the world, but the return is now based on a Transcendent that has relativized the phenomenal world and yet given new meaning to it. Both have a view of time, although that view differs, and, for the confrontationist, history is the place where the sacred reveals itself, while, for the interior vision, history seems essentially secondary and penultimate.

Two more introductory comments must be made. The vision described below is not only represented in the so-called Eastern religions. Although rooted in South Asia, this vision is having a powerful effect in the Western world, perhaps especially in the United States. Not only do Asian immigrants bring this vision with them, but the vision is seeping into America's collective consciousness. Just as Islam, representing a relatively straightforward confrontation vision, is appealing to many African Americans, especially those in the lower and lower-middle classes, so the vision of interiority attracts upper-middle- and upper-class whites, especially—but by no means exclusively—the young. In an age of self-doubt, self-cultivation, self-absorption, anomie, and introspection, this is an especially compelling vision. There also seems to be an "elective affinity" between so-called New Age movements and "pop" psychology. Both are carriers of this vision, but I shall cast doubt on how true they are to it and how well they understand it.

Two quotations, from students I taught at Princeton University in the

mid-1980s, eloquently illustrate the impact of “immanent transcendence.” I had asked my students to write briefly about why they were taking a course titled “Religion and Society in India.” I provide two of the answers, which are not typical but which are, I believe, representative of the quest for the sacred that is being pursued by white, relatively well-off young Americans:

I recently shaved my head. Twenty-five years of age, sun in Aquarius, Sagittarius rising, I have studied Marx, Jung, Wittgenstein and Heidegger; Gandhi, and Scientology; TM, Sufism. I have flirted with Yoga, music a lot, drugs a lot. I get paranoid a lot especially when, as is now relatively infrequent I get stoned. I’m tense and nervous, no longer truly outgoing. I’m heavily involved with a woman, which keeps me from total loneliness. I don’t know what to do with my life, aside from “seek.” I have recently thought of studying Psychology, Philosophy, and Carpentry. I’m low on discipline now but still think of myself as a mystic, seeker-whatever. I just discovered that I repress the Jesus in me (archetype), but the intensity of joy and sadness that we find in Rabiya, Kabir, Jesus and the popular Gandhi is symbolically powerful for me. I seek to understand the different types of “self” that have existed. My current myth is that study of Hinduism is another step toward my personal unknown goal of eclectic and idiosyncratic invention. Where it will lead, who knows? Nor do I know who I am—I find it disconcerting. I seem totally alienated from Self. I’m elite and falsely humble. I have some kind of faith but I’m suspicious that it too is inflated and absurd.

A young woman writes:

I am the rebel daughter of a well-intentioned Presbyterian pastor/Classics professor and his mild librarian wife. I picked up and left one year under slightly fishy circumstances, heading out to follow my own archetypal rites of passage straight into the clutches of the Northeastern Ivy League. Growing up in the Bible Belt has scarred me for life; I swore off Religion and closed-minded people. But a sly language distribution requirement snuck up on me, and before I knew it I found myself a Junior Classics major and ardent feminist. In an introductory religion course, I discovered (a) that religion and believing in God have absolutely nothing to do with one another; (b) that I have an irremediably spiritual base; and (c) that a whole continent of people (India) had actually been thinking my own secret-most heretical thoughts about “God” for thousands of years. And so here I am, seeking knowledge but not really believing in it, trying to find a way to tell

my father that I'm considering seminary—if I can find one that will admit me, feeling that I have too many questions for my own good.

These may seem humorous, and they are, but here are two articulate and eloquent representatives of an important cultural trend in American society. This trend adds to our pluralism and proves yet again that we are not “secular,” at least not in the popular meaning of that term.

The other comment has to do with the problem of translation. It is not a major issue in this particular talk, but one should remember that any translation from one language to another is also a translation from one culture to another. Terms like “Being” and “sense of limitation” and even “suffering” cannot adequately convey what terms such as *sat*, *dukha*, and *samsara* mean for another civilization. One becomes aware of the limitations of even simple translation when one remembers that John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* was interpreted by the Japanese as “Angry Raisins”!

II. THE VISION

A fascinating element of the two visions is that they both appeared in human history at the same time, the ninth or eighth centuries B.C.E. One was revealed to the early Hebrew prophets in West Asia and the other appeared with the Upanishadic sages of South Asia. Indians, like the ancient Hebrews, had had a long history preceding their transcendent “breakthrough.” One feature of that history was the rise and fall of an ancient urban civilization, centered in the Indus River valley but covering a vast triangle of what is today Northwest India and Pakistan. Of all the ancient centers that served as “cores” for today's major civilizations, this is the only one whose language remains undeciphered. The ports of the great centers of this river-valley civilization traded by sea with civilizations of the Tigris-Euphrates valley from at least 2500 to 2100 B.C.E. The Indus civilization vanished, perhaps because of the invasion of Aryan-language speakers from Central Asia, around 1800 B.C.E., and even its memory was forgotten until its ruins began to be discovered early in this century. Its influence on later Hinduism, however, can hardly be doubted.

The Aryan-speaking invaders who arrived at the Indus and then, mixing with the local population, spread eastward to the Gangetic River plains during the next thousand years, brought their own oral religious traditions, the early Vedas, and the ritual practice of sacrifice centered on a sacred fire.

By the ninth century B.C.E., the Gangetic valley had a thriving urban civilization of its own and certain upper-class, but nonpriestly, intellectuals—

predominantly male but also female—felt a restlessness about life. Eventually, some drifted off into the dense forest beyond the river valley to meditate on the deeper questions of existence. Each attracted small groups of followers with whom they shared the results of their meditation. These musings were eventually collected around certain quasi-legendary figures, and these clusters became the Upanishads—which, in the ancient Aryan language of Sanskrit, means “to sit down near.” After some time, these Upanishads were to become the Vedanta—the end and fulfillment of the Vedas—which, along with the earlier Vedas, are accepted as *Sruti*, “revealed” literature, by Hindus even today. The vision they embodied, however, as mentioned earlier, stretches far beyond contemporary Hinduism.

To understand this vision of immanent transcendence, one must concentrate on three Sanskritic words. The first is *samsara* which means “flow,” although a better translation is “runaround,” which catches both the spatial and psychological sense of the term. The dominant metaphor for this word is water, either the ocean or a river. *Samsara*, for these *gurus* and *sannyasins*, was what one must be liberated or saved *from*. In this view, as a person becomes more conscious, and consciousness is a key term, one feels more the frustrations and limitations of life. The deeper one thinks and feels, the more one finds that one is in pain because one longs for what the phenomenal world cannot give. This becomes genuine suffering on the deepest level.

These early sages would have felt at home with the myth of their fellow Aryan speakers, the Greeks: the story of Sisyphus, who was condemned by the gods to push a huge rock up a mountain only to see it roll down again as soon as it reached the top. He then had to start all over again. This endless and senseless task was to continue for eternity. For the Indians, suicide was no solution for the meaninglessness and despair that they perceived to be at the center of life because, in their view, one's life did not end in physical death, but rather, one's essential self continued to live on because the essential self transmigrated after death into another form of life.

The Indian myth that best catches the sense of *samsara* is the tale of the parade of ants. One day a great king, named Indra, was sitting in the courtyard of his beautiful palace when he saw a young man walking past. He called the young man in and asked expansively and condescendingly if the youth had ever seen a finer palace or finer kingdom. The boy just laughed, and Indra was offended. The boy pointed to a line of ants that was parading across the courtyard. “Oh, great king,” he said, “see those ants. Once each was a mighty king. That army of ants is an army of former Indras.”

One cannot help but contrast this original view of *samsara* with that of many

in the modern New Age movement who seize so eagerly on the concept of transmigration. I well remember teaching this material years ago at Hunter College in New York City, and students would say, "Oh yes, I remember when I was with Cleopatra sailing up the Nile," or, "I was in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon." Never were they the helpless and hopeless *fellahin* who plowed the fields at the edge of the Nile, and never were they the brutalized slaves who built the Hanging Gardens.

Shirley MacLaine, a fine actress but a bad writer, has written of her transmigratory experiences in several books. In one, *Dancing in the Light*, she visualizes her past lives. She says that she had been a princess who communicated telepathically with elephants and a Mongolian nomad brutally murdered by a rejected suitor whom she recognizes as an incarnation of her present-day former husband!⁴ A few years ago one of my students gave me a cartoon that shows two salamanders sitting in a desert somewhere. One says to the other, "There it is again . . . a feeling that in a past life I was someone named Shirley MacLaine."

A hilarious misuse of this ancient concept has appeared in an advertisement that can be discovered in some of America's most fashionable magazines. On bright red slick paper in large yellow print appears the word *samsara*. Underneath it one reads, "A sense of serenity. A new and rare fragrance by Guerlain where sandalwood and jasmine reign, rich and lingering, subtle yet persistent, to touch the innermost senses. *Samsara*—a timeless fulfillment." If one turns over this ad they can find a flap and are instructed to "unfold and rub on wrist to be touched by *Samsara*." One could not even imagine this if one were trying to write the most outrageous of satires.

This merger of New Age spirituality and capitalist consumerism is typical of the way America sanitizes and makes superficial the deepest and most thoughtful ancient concepts. Here transmigration has been wedded to an Enlightenment idea of progress ("every day in every way life gets better and better") and to an unreflective hedonism that celebrates life at its most shallow and egocentric.

For the Indians, *samsara* was an elaborate and dread-filled metaphor for the ultimate pain and helplessness of a life dominated by worldly desires. To be reborn eternally was to participate in an endless round of lower to higher forms and *back again* and also repeatedly to endure the pain of the loss of dear ones, the advancing ailments of old age, the certainty of decay and disappointment that is the lot of all of us and is more deeply felt as one becomes more

⁴ Shirley MacLaine, *Dancing in the Light* (New York: Bantam, 1985).

conscious. The goal had to be to escape from this cycle, to be liberated into what was “really real.”

Our next term is *karma*. *Karma* does not mean fate (*nyati* in Sanskrit). It translates into *act* or *deed*. To understand this concept it is necessary to look at an early Upanishadic text:

A person is made up not of acts but of desires only. In reply to this I say: as is their desire such is their resolve; as is their resolve such is the action [*karma*] they perform; what action they perform they procure for themselves . . . where one's mind is attached—the inner self goes thereto with action, being attached to it alone. . . . So the one who desires. Now the one who does not desire is freed from desire. Being very *Brahman*, they go to *Brahman*.⁵

The Upanishadic vision may not provide much place for history, but it is a pioneer in psychology. Here it posits that desire forms the will, which then leads to action, but at the base of desire is what we call the ego. The ego is always seeking to expand either its power over others or its sensuous appetites. One or two everyday examples will illustrate this. If one finds a five-dollar bill on campus, for a moment one is happy. The thought then arises, however, “Why wasn't it a *twenty-dollar* bill?” Or, if one discovers a restaurant that serves a good meal, one then takes a friend to eat at that restaurant. If the food is not better the second time around, it does not taste as good as the first meal. Our egos always demand more; the greater the satisfaction the more the expectation. The world can never fulfill this insatiable egocentric appetite. Thus, the individual ego is the source of *samsara*.

Moksha is the third term, and it means “liberation.” Since egocentric desire is a problem, all the Eastern religions based on this vision seek to transcend, transform, destroy, kill the ego. One does this by following a *yoga* (discipline) or *marga* (path) set forth by a *guru*, just as the disciples of the Upanishadic sages did.

Once the ego is overcome through *gnana* (saving knowledge), one discovers that underneath it rests the essential Self, called the *Atman*. Further, one must learn that this essential Self is the same as *Brahman*. There is an ancient Sanskrit word, *sat*, which means “Being,” “isness,” the essence of life. Once one learns that one's deepest self is one with this essence, then one can truly “be.” *Samsara* is now seen as the penultimate reality it is, not true reality. Thus, as a product of “false consciousness,” it disappears. The vicious cycle,

⁵ *Bṛihad Aranyaka Upanishad*, IV: 4:5–6, (translated by Hume); quoted in *The Hindu Tradition*, ed. Ainslie Embree (New York: Vintage, 1972), 62.

center of pain and frustration, vanishes. It is important to stress that, for the Hindu, truth is only "true" when it transforms. For this tradition, the statement "I know the good that I cannot do" makes no sense. Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, written in Hindi, was translated into English with the title "My Experiments with Truth." It would have been equally accurate to entitle it "My Experience of Being." For this vision, at its best, renouncing the ego does not mean renouncing the world. One is freed to serve the world egolessly, which, for the recipient of this vision, means compassionately.

III. THREE EXAMPLES

To illustrate this ancient vision, I will use three examples that a Hindu might use but that are also very attractive to a historian of religion because they speak in the language of text, parable, and poem.

First, the text. It should be understood that, in this vision, texts are not all-important. Rather, texts point the way toward the saving experience. It is the experience of the realization of "Being Itself" that is the final validation of this vision. If one were to choose a key Upanishadic text, however, it would probably be the story of Uddalaka and his son, Svetaketu.⁶ Svetaketu has been sent away by his father to study the performance of the Vedic sacrifices. When he returns, after twelve years, he is conceited, stiff. Upon seeing this, his father is upset and asks him if he has comprehended that which is incomprehensible. The son is immediately humble. His ego is crushed. Uddalaka sighs at the thought of all the tuition he has paid out for naught but determines to teach the boy himself. He tells his son to pick a fig from a nearby tree. The youth does so, and the father then asks him what he sees inside the seed. Svetaketu replies that he sees nothing. The father tells him the "nothing" that he cannot see is the essence that pervades all Being and says to him in Sanskrit, "Tat tvam asi," "That art thou, Svetaketu." These are the three most important words of the vision: *Atman is Brahman*. The essence of each of us is "Being Itself," and *gnana*, transforming knowledge, will bring the realization of this truth.

The next example is a parable that is especially fitting for Princeton and, I have been told by some students, may be one basis for the recent movie, *The Lion King*. It seems that the mother of a baby tiger was killed, and the tiger was adopted by a herd of goats. The little tiger was very happy and made sounds like the goats and ate grasses and bushes. One day, a great big tiger came along and was upset to see the baby tiger acting like a goat. He jumped into the

⁶ *Chandogya Upanishad*, VI: 1-14, passim; quoted in *The Hindu Tradition*, ed. Embree, 59-62.

center of the herd and grabbed the little tiger by the neck. He carried him off to a pond, whose waters were very still. He told the little tiger to look into the pond. The little tiger saw his real image for the first time. The big tiger said, "You look like me; now *be* like me." He then took the little tiger to his cave where he had just killed a deer. He asked the baby tiger to eat the deer, but the baby tiger choked on this unfamiliar food. However, he was very afraid of the big tiger, and he took a second bite. Suddenly, he felt a delicious tingle from the tip of his nose to the tip of his tail, and he let out a great big roar because he knew he was a tiger!

This simple parable sums up the three truths of the Upanishadic vision. First, the baby tiger is not a goat who becomes a tiger. This vision is not so much an existential quest as it is a realization of what one has always essentially been. We are "Being Itself," but we have to realize this truth. Second, we must still our desires if we are to see our true image, just as the waters of the pond had to be still for the baby tiger to see who he was. This is the task of the *yogas*, which are learned from a *guru*. Third, we choke on the unfamiliar food of this vision. All that we have is our individuality, our ego. To let go of this is to lose that which we think is essential. But the Upanishadic vision insists that it is only as we destroy our egos that we can come to learn who we really are, which is *atman-Brahman*, true Being.

The third example is a poem. When, for several years, I led a New York University graduate group to India, we spent several weeks studying at the University of Bombay. One of the professors who taught us Indian literature was Nissim Ezekiel, who is a famous Indian poet. I was fascinated by his teaching and discovered a book of his poems. In that book, there was a poem called "Tribute to the Upanishads." I was excited by this discovery because Ezekiel was writing about the same text that I have given above. It may be impossible even to glimpse another civilization's central vision, but, if there is a possibility, it is most accessible through poetry, not philosophy or theology.

There is another comment that needs to be made before I share this poem. Nissim Ezekiel is hardly an Indian name. Over a thousand years ago some of Ezekiel's ancestors came to the west coast of India. They were Jews fleeing oppression. Today, Ezekiel does not consider himself a Jew, and his ancestors have obviously intermarried over the generations. However, I find it a useful parable for our time that it takes an Indian poet, of Jewish heritage, writing in English about an ancient Sanskrit text, to illustrate, for an American Christian, a central vision that is the base of Indian civilization and has also influenced other civilizations and cultures. It also should be said that this poem is especially valuable because it demonstrates what it is like for one to

catch a glimpse of *moksha*. For this poem, *moksha* is not a continuous state but an occasional glimpse of what ultimate liberation will be—a liberation toward which one strives but whose glimpse can help one survive the coils of *samsara*:

To feel that one is Somebody
 is to drive oneself
 in a kind of hearse—
 the destination is obvious.
 I don't want to be
 the skin of the fruit
 or the flesh
 or even the seed,
 which only grows into another
 wholesome fruit.
 The secret locked within the seed
 becomes my need, and so
 I shrink to the nothingness
 within the seed.
 At first it is cold,
 I shiver there,
 later comes a touch of truth,
 a ferment in the darkness,
 finally a teasing light.
 For the present, this is enough,
 that I am free
 to be the Self in me,
 which is not Somebody—
 not, at any rate,
 the mortal me,
 but the Eye of the eye
 that is trying to see.⁷

There can be no better summing up of the great alternate vision of immanent transcendence than this remarkable poem.⁸

⁷ Nissim Ezekiel, *Hymns in Darkness* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1976), 41.

⁸ Philosophical and ontological arguments have continued within the tradition created by this vision. Western scholars also argue over this topic. The main issue, crudely stated, is whether the *atman* totally "exhausts" *Brahman* (*Advaita*) or whether there is *Brahman* "left over." The latter view can lead to types of "theism" (*Vishistadvaita*, *Dvaita*, or *Saiva Siddhantha*). This "theism," however, still affirms that the essence of the true Self is the same as the essence of *Brahman*, and so, in my opinion, it remains ultimately a monism. These more "theistic" emphases do, however, provide for the presence of grace.

IV. CLOSING COMMENTS: PRINCETON PILGRIMAGE

Even when presented in such a foreshortened fashion, the Upanishadic vision of transcendent immanence raises, for Christians, many issues and challenges. For example, it reopens and deepens discussions about the status of the *imago dei* within us; whether we, especially mainline Protestants, overly emphasize “justification” at the expense of “sanctification”; whether we should be more sympathetic to mysticism and “spiritual formation”; of the meanings that the metaphor “creation” embodies.

There are also opportunities for witness that this vision opens up. Two traits of the Christian tradition seem especially important if civilizations are to live together creatively amid the enormous growth of power and knowledge present in the contemporary world. One of these traits is the knowledge of the inwardness of evil, the awareness that dangerous propensities and appetites lurk beneath the surface of human nature, especially within the nature of each of us. When we are blind to the evil within ourselves, we deprive ourselves of any possibility of dealing realistically with the evil in others.

Two devotional songs (*vacanas*), from South India, ca. the tenth to twelfth century C.E., illustrate this “theistic monism.” One comments on the issue of gender, and the second offers an environmental ethic that includes all living things. The second song is also a striking example of the influence of Jainism on Hinduism. Both of these “theistic” poems, to me, demonstrate that their fundamental base is monistic.

If they see
breasts and long hair coming
they call it woman,
if beard and whiskers
they call it man:
But, look, the self that hovers
in between
is neither man
nor woman . . . (A. K. Ramanujan, ed. and trans., *Speaking of Siva* [New York: Penguin, 1973],

27)

Knowing one's lowliness
in every word;
the spray of insects in the air
in every gesture of the hand;
things living, things moving
come sprung from the earth
under every footfall;
and when holding a plant
or joining it to another
or in the letting it go
to be all mercy
to be light
as a dusting brush
of peacock feathers:
such moving, such awareness
is love that makes us one
with the Lord . . . (Ramanujan, *Speaking of Siva*, 54–55)

The second trait is an awareness of a responsibility to history. Through such doctrines as creation and the incarnation, the Christian should view history with utmost seriousness and be aware that it is in history that the God of Jesus Christ is most fully active. At a time when much of American culture seems marked by a flight from history into the escapist depths of individual egos, so-called marginalized groups, in America and around the world, are becoming more historically conscious and involved. This is true for India also. While this is to be welcomed, unless leavened by an awareness of the inwardness of evil, action in history can lead to irresponsible utopianisms or totalitarianisms or both. In India, this new awareness often leads to a rise in self-righteous Hindu "fundamentalism" coupled with a religious nationalism that, like all fundamentalisms, "literalizes" faith, demystifying it into mere ideology. The Upanishadic vision, for all its undoubted strengths, does not put either the inwardness of evil or responsibility to history at its center and may even deny them any ultimate significance.⁹

If Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the incarnation of that Logos through whom and for whom the whole universe has been created, and if that created universe includes the orders of authorities and powers, then Christ is present in the religions of the world, judging them, redeeming them, and making them—and all creation—ever new. As followers of this Christ, it is our task to attempt to "unveil" his presence, proclaim it, and participate in it through struggles for love and justice.

As the historian of religions at this ecumenical Christian seminary, it has been my arduous but exhilarating adventure to guide theological students on what I trust have been voyages of discovery, pilgrimages into new worlds of meanings, explorations of other understandings of the universe. It is my hope that at least some of these students can affirm with me the words of T. S. Eliot, a Christian, who was deeply influenced by the Upanishadic vision:¹⁰

We shall not cease from exploration,
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started,
And to know the place [and the Person]
for the first time.¹¹

⁹ "The implications of the Hindu concept of time for humanity's view of its place in the cosmos are obviously great. There is no place for the unique event, for the moment that happens only once; nor is there much likelihood of people taking too seriously their achievements in constructing political institutions." Ainslie Embree, *Utopias in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 28.

¹⁰ See Cleo McNelly Kearns, *T. S. Eliot and Indic Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

¹¹ T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," in *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1943), 59. Bracketed addition is mine.

Dante: Poet-Theologian

by PETER S. HAWKINS

Professor of Religion and Literature at Yale Divinity School, Peter S. Hawkins gave the Stone Lectures for the 1994–95 academic year on the theme Dante and the Bible. His publications include The Language of Grace: Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy, Iris Murdoch and Listening for God: Contemporary Literature and the Life of Faith. This lecture, the first of five, was given on February 6, 1995.

“TAKE IT AND READ, take it and read . . .” These are the words Augustine hears in the garden at Milan, apparently coming from the house next door. He can’t make out whether the voices are male or female; he half wonders whether they are part of some childhood game that he’s forgotten. But as the chant is repeated over and over again—“Take it and read, take it and read”—he realizes that, no, these are words he has never heard before. In fact, he has no idea what they mean. They may be only kid stuff that has no bearing on him, some Italian game all the rage in Milan but foreign to his own north African youth, indeed, a part of the lost world of childhood itself a lifetime away from the anguish he feels now, a tormented man of thirty-two, with his emotions in crisis and his life up for grabs.

Or maybe the weird refrain, in fact, means something for him, offers a word of revelation that might come not from some unseen group of children next door but from God: “Take it and read, take it and read.” Making the leap of faith that always soars out of desperation, Augustine also makes a leap of interpretation: He decides that the chanted refrain is a command from heaven to open the scripture at random and to read the first passage that jumps out to meet his eye. Here, in fact, the games of his own childhood do come into play, for it was common practice to treat the poetry of Virgil in exactly this way, that is, to charge into the *Aeneid* and, amid the fall of Troy or in the course of Aeneas’ vision of the afterlife, to come as if by chance upon some line that would turn out to have a remarkable bearing on one’s own life.

But that was then, when “poetical fictions” enthralled him and his school-boy friends.¹ Now, putting away childish things, he turns not to the *Aeneid*, to poetry, but to the Bible. He rushes through the garden where he had hidden himself to cry in private, and then retrieves the holy book left behind in his frenzy. He snatches up the volume, opens it with a kind of fury, and reads in silence the words that first meet his eye, from the thirteenth chapter of

¹ *Confessions* 1.13 (“poetica illa figmenta”). *St. Augustine’s Confessions*, ed. and trans. William Watts, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

Romans: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy: But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscence" (vv. 13–14). The uncanny chant that seemed at first to come from children in the house next door leads him to none other than this scriptural text, to the exact words he needs in order to become the person God is calling him to be. "No further would I read; nor needed I. For instantly even with the end of the sentence, by a light as it were of confidence now darted into my heart, all the darkness of doubting vanished away."²

Augustine's moment in the garden of Milan, when he found a text that, in turn, found him, is perhaps the most spectacular encounter with scripture in all of Christian tradition. But there is also another book that has come to some of its readers under conditions scarcely less extraordinary and to ends no less fruitful. In his autobiography, *Miracle in the Evening*, theatrical producer and director Norman Bel Geddes describes his own Augustinian turning point in the year 1921. Like Augustine, he was in a state of profound emotional turmoil over the course of his life and work. Getting up from his desk in something like a panic, he found himself feverish, dizzy, unsteady on his feet.

I suddenly started to fall. I clutched for some sort of support but there was nothing to grab, and I fell headlong into the bookcase. Dazed and scared, I lay still for some moments, then pulled myself into a sitting position. I discovered that I was holding a book in my right hand. I opened it and, bemusedly, read the same passage over and over again before I realized what it was.³

The book in question turns out to be not the Bible but the *Divine Comedy*, and the lines that held Bel Geddes' attention some verses from the second canto of *Inferno* that describe how Dante's initial fear of taking a journey through the three realms of the afterlife—through hell, purgatory, and paradise—changed in a moment to joyful resolve. Instead of being overwhelmed by fear of the undertaking, the poet says, "tanto buono ardire al cor mi corse,/ ch'i' cominciavi come persona franca" ("such warm daring rushed into my heart, that I began as one who has been freed" [2.131–132]).⁴ When Augustine came upon his text in Romans 13, he said he found that he had no

² *Confessions* 8.12 ("nec ultra volui legere, nec opus erat. statum quippe cum fine huiusce sententiae, quasi luce securitatis infusa cordi meo, omnes dubitationis tenebrae diffugerunt").

³ *Miracle in the Evening*, ed. William Kelley (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1960), 248.

⁴ All citations of Dante are from *The Divine Comedy*, trans. (with a commentary) Charles S. Singleton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970–75).

desire or need to read further, and yet, of course, he was to spend the rest of his life working in one way or another on the Bible. Likewise for Bel Geddes, the random but life-changing verses from the *Comedy* kept him turning page after page, taking him on a journey that in essence gave him something to live for: "Before the night was out, I had read the three volumes [of Norton's translation of the *Divine Comedy*] from beginning to end. And the next day . . . I was embarking upon a plan of [theatrical] production for the poem that would occupy at least half my waking hours for the next two years."

Nor is Bel Geddes the only accidental reader of Dante who found himself "discovered" in a personal dark wood by a poem he just happened to take up and read. In August of 1944, for instance, Dorothy L. Sayers hears the cry of an air-raid siren and knows that once again Hitler's bombs are falling on London. Rushing through her house on the way to an air-raid shelter, she snatches up a book set aside for reading but which she has never found time to pick up or even dust off. The volume she grabs turns out to be Dante's *Inferno*, and once she begins to read it in the shelter, despite the sirens wailing, she finds herself unable to put it down, even when the "all clear" sounds and life is meant to return to normal. "However foolish it may sound, the plain fact is that I bolted my meals, neglected my sleep, work, and correspondence, drove my friends crazy, and paid only distracted attention to [Hitler's bombs], until I had panted my way through the Three Realms of the dead from top to bottom and from bottom to top."⁵

Nor would she ever again put the book down. For the rest of her life, from 1944 until her death in 1957, Sayers translated the *Comedy* for the new Penguin paperback series, wrote notes and commentary, lectured over the radio as well as at Oxford and Cambridge, and even worked on a novel about the relationship between Dante and his daughter. In short, Sayers heard the call to "take it and read" in the terrifying noise of an air-raid siren and found in the pages of the *Comedy* the final chapter of her own life's work.

No doubt the Stone Lecturer should have a personal experience able to live up to all of this drama, especially if he proposes to deliver a week's worth of lectures on the subject of Dante and the Bible. The truth is, however, that my first encounters with the poem were utterly disappointing and are now lost in the oblivion of my undergraduate education. As a freshman in a "Western World Literature" class, I know I read the *Inferno* but remember nothing

⁵ "... And Telling You a Story," in *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*, ed. C.S. Lewis (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), 2. An account of Sayers' discovery of Dante is offered by Barbara Reynolds first in *The Passionate Intellect: Dorothy L. Sayers' Encounter with Dante* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1989) and then in *Dorothy L. Sayers: Her Life and Soul* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 353-56.

more about it than I do of any of the other great classics routinely wasted on the young. Then, working on the principle that a first lack of success might well lead one to try, try again—and because, to be honest, the time the class was offered was convenient—I took a summer-school course that was entirely on the *Comedy*. It was taught by a professor of Italian who had the native speaker's passion for Dante and for the beauty of his language. This time, as a college junior, I do retain some memories. There was, for instance, the fluency of my teacher's Italian (which, alas, was incomprehensible to everyone else in the room); there was also the importance of keeping track of who occupied what place in the afterlife (for excellence in which I was awarded an A, my only grade in Dante studies). But the whole enterprise was enervated by an uneasy sense that there might be a great deal *less* here than met the eye, despite the overkill of names, footnotes, diagrams, and vast stretches of serious boredom in the *Paradiso*. Maybe you had to be in the middle of the journey of life to get the point; in any event, there was not enough going on that had anything to do with twenty-year-old me. Or, to twist Augustine's words wildly out of context, "No further would I read; nor needed I."

Then something happened. In September of 1972, while studying for my Ph.D. oral examinations in the Yale English department, my friend Nancy Vickers suggested that I take a break and go with her to the first session of John Freccero's course on the *Comedy*. I explained my sad earlier history with the poem, told her how being twice bored made me thrice shy, argued that my examiners in the English department would certainly ask me nothing about an Italian poem, protested that there simply wasn't time. But she prevailed in the end; or was it that somewhere, somehow, I heard a still small voice saying, "Take it and read, take it and read"? In any case, I quickly checked out the bilingual John Sinclair edition of the *Inferno* from Sterling Library and justified attendance at this first meeting of the class, just this one afternoon, as a well-deserved "study break" from English literature.

Little could I have known then what the impact of that initial meeting would be: how I would not only audit the second class but every one after it, right through to the end of the spring semester; how I would go to Italy that very summer to begin my study of Italian; how my English department dissertation on *The Faerie Queene* would eventually be held hostage by Dante for two inappropriate chapters; how, after I came as a professor to the Yale Divinity School in 1976, I too would teach a yearlong course on the *Comedy*, and indeed would do so every other academic year for almost two decades now (right up to and including this one); how the poem, in fact, would become not only the center of my teaching, lecturing, and writing, but also the deep

foundation of my own imaginative life as a Christian; that it would be an inexhaustible source not only of images, characters, and narratives but also of theological vision; that, for me at least, the *Comedy* would be, after the scriptures, the book through which I would find my own life.

I ask myself now what made the difference then. To some extent, I can chalk it up to finding a brilliant teacher, whose eloquence (just like Virgil's within the *Comedy*) was able to move my heart as well as my mind; was able not only to dazzle me with the poem's erudition but to involve me in its drama. Freccero presented the poem as a story of conversion, and, following in the footsteps of his guidance, I think I began myself to be challenged, reoriented, converted. As a student of literature, for instance, I could see in the *Comedy's* genius all that a poem might do, all that the figure of Virgil as Poet could mean; but I could also experience the limits of art, could see the point where even the greatest human language inevitably falls short or runs headlong into silence. As a young man in love, I could catch the daring, even dangerous truth of what Dante was attempting in the figure of Beatrice: how *eros* could be transfigured into *caritas* without turning its back on the body; how we can come to see the divine face, however tentatively and imperfectly, by looking deeply into the faces of those we are given to love.

Twice a week, for two hours a class, Freccero gave the *Comedy* the most sustained and impassioned exegesis of text I had ever encountered, either at Union Theological Seminary (where I did my M.Div.) or elsewhere at Yale. He taught us to take up the poem and read it deeply; or, as Dante students traditionally say of their beloved pedagogues, he taught us to "see the stars."

This accolade is not meant as idle praise or mere hyperbole, because it acknowledges that, in many respects, learning to read the *Comedy* is all about stargazing, about learning to move both imaginatively and morally with the heavens. For this reason, perhaps, each of the three canticles concludes with the word *stelle*, or stars. At the end of the *Inferno*, for instance, as Dante and Virgil finally leave behind the underworld of hell, we read "e quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle" ("and from thence we came forth to see again the stars" [*Inf.* 34.139]). Then, after the ascent up Mount Purgatorio, Dante (now without Virgil) tells us in closing that at last he is ready for heaven, "puro e disposto a salire a le stelle" ("pure and ready to mount up to the stars" [*Purg.* 33.135]). Then, just as the whole poem culminates in a vision of God that in the end the poet can neither remember nor describe, Dante finds himself in total accord with the divine, so that, even as he is on the brink of rapture into the beatific vision, his desire and will rotate together in perfect accord. It is as

if he were himself a constellation, revolved by "l'amor che move il sole e le altre stelle" ("the love that moves the sun and the other stars" [*Par.* 33.145]).

In this repetition of the word *stelle*, "stars," as the end marker of each of the three canticles, there are a number of things to note: an interest in symmetry and in triads that characterizes the whole poem; a penchant for repetition with significant difference; an orientation that asks the reader to look up rather than down, that takes heaven as the ultimate reference point, that conceptualizes the entire work as a "consideration," that is, as a movement *con sidera*, with the stars.

There is little in our own contemporary world that makes it easy to stargaze. To begin with, the stars are difficult to see, yet another victim of urban sprawl, obscured as they are by light pollution as well as by dirty air. But then there is also the foreignness of Dante's whole notion of what we call "outer space." For most of us, I would guess, the cosmos is imagined either as a void (cold, dark, meaningless, pocked with "black holes") or as something to conquer or fool around with, whether through "Star Wars" weaponry or spacecraft named "Challenger"—a last frontier to domesticate, exploit commercially, and even develop for the tourist industry.

Dante's notion of the universe is utterly different. It begins in the inscrutable mind of God the Trinity, that Mystery of Unity and Community, who is the immaterial ground of all being. From eternity, and utterly outside the realms of time and space, the Father begets the Son in Love, which Love is the Holy Spirit. For reasons hid in light inaccessible, from before time and forever, this triune God created time and space, bringing into being a universe of nine concentric crystalline spheres, with earth at the center. The tenth heaven, called the Empyrean, is the heavenly "no place" where God "is," in perfect stillness, off the charts of any finite map or representation. Within the embrace of the Empyrean are the nine interlocking heavens—the Primum Mobile, the Stellatum or Heaven of the Fixed Stars, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon. Each of these spheres moves with a different and decreasing velocity, from the incalculable speed of the Primum Mobile to the slow rotation of the Moon. At the center of this structure, standing absolutely inert, is the earth.

In the *Paradiso* we learn the cause of this celestial movement and the reason for its different velocities. Each of the spheres is guided by an angelic order, from the seraphim who watch over the Primum Mobile to the angels who govern the Moon. Each of these angelic orders is also endowed with a different capacity to know and love God, a knowledge and a love that in turn "translate" into movement. The revolving of the heavens, therefore, is a

complex angelic dance, in which vision of the Trinity generates adoration and adoration produces speed. Quite literally, love makes this cosmos go 'round.

The earth alone does not move, standing apart from the celestial dance of creation. There are, in fact, good reasons for its inertia. When Lucifer and the other rebel angels chose to love themselves more than God, they were expelled from the divine presence and plummeted down through the concentric spheres of the universe to the dead center of the earth. All of hell was then configured around them, at the core of our planet, in a realm of negativity that represents the rejection of God and God's kingdom. Dante imagines this inferno as a parody of heaven, a sinkhole that funnels gradually downward to darkness, as sin upon sin brings creation a little closer to nothingness.

But God's will is always to bring something out of nothing. And so, from the beginning, even as Lucifer fell to the earth and thereby lodged his rejection of God at the heart of our planet, there was a compensatory move on the part of creation. As if in revulsion at the impact of Satan, the earth shrinks from his presence, pushes through the surface of the southern hemisphere at the antipodes of where Jerusalem would one day be, and in so doing raises up a mountain of unimaginable height. At its summit God plants a garden paradise, an Eden, and in it places two human creatures who, like the angels, have the capacity to know, love and choose God—or not.

We are told in the *Paradiso*, by no less an authority than Adam himself, that the first couple lasted a total of six happy hours. Then they too said no, were expelled from the garden, and stepped into that sad reality of alienation and death that we know as human history. But once again, God does not leave disaster alone. Instead, he works within the historical process itself, and, according to Dante, on two distinct and parallel fronts: openly, in the calling of Israel to bear the promise of redemption to the earth; and covertly, within the history of the Roman empire. These two parallel stories of providence working out its intentions within human affairs at last come together “in the fullness of time,” when a Jewish girl living in an outpost of Roman jurisdiction is given the opportunity to say yes to God and in fact does so; when, as Dante puts it in *Purgatorio* 10, she “turns the key that opens the supreme love” (42).

That opened door to the mystery of God's love is the incarnation of Christ, who dies in Jerusalem, descends into hell, and restores to humankind the possibility of standing in God's presence in eternity—the possibility of being “in-Godded” and “emparadised,” to use the language of communion that Dante invents in the *Paradiso* to describe what it will mean to see God “face to face.” Because of Christ, in other words, the same earth that has Satan lodged at its frozen heart is also the place where divine grace is at work, calling us to

look up at the movement of the stars and, in watching them, to learn how to dance.

Within the hundred cantos of the *Comedy*, it is Dante himself—the character through whose eyes we see everything along the way—who learns to move with the sun and the other stars. In fact, at the very outset of the poem we find him trying to do precisely this: to escape the dark wood in which he finds himself lost and terrified, to climb a radiant mountain he can see but is powerless to ascend. On his own he can do nothing. But because of the intervention of heaven, he is sent a guide who arrives on the scene to tell him that the way up is initially the way down; that if he would move toward the light he must first confront everything that is dark not only within himself but within the larger human community to which we all belong.

The way down, of course, leads through hell, with its step-by-step descent into the heart of darkness. This is the section of the *Comedy* that readers have always liked best, in part because of the excitement that horror provides, in part because we feel most at home there. For what the *Inferno* describes is our world without grace, our cities without love, our will to power without mercy. In hell, the self is sovereign, cut off, frozen in obsession and monomania, always alone no matter how dense the crowd. This is not to say that nightmare is all that Dante experiences there, for the *Inferno* is full of experiences that draw upon his empathy, that remind him how the mystery of evil is in fact the mystery of flawed good. But in the end, by the time Dante stands at the bottom of the universe and in the grotesque presence of Satan, hell stands exposed for what it is—a dog-eat-dog world in which cannibalism replaces communion, in which the atrocities of earth are allowed to play themselves out for eternity.

Purgatory represents a waking up from the nightmare. Or, to use the anachronism of photography, purgatory develops hell's negative. And so, instead of spiraling down through the circles of *Inferno*, Dante spirals up, ascending the radiant mountain he first saw at the opening of the poem but could not climb on his own. Readers often find themselves disappointed with this move: The penitents are less "interesting" than the damned, their spiritual therapy less riveting than torture, and the poem's new interest in big questions—about love, free will, and the nature of the good—far less compelling than the narcissism of spellbinders who know how to stop a passerby in his infernal tracks. There are, however, new pleasures in the text. The "fat relentless ego" is not the only subject of concern; the mind can begin to stretch for larger understanding. One also begins to imagine human community as it might be, if grace were given the upper hand. Gone are the operatic

soloists of *Inferno*—each of them singing his or her life song, but nobody listening to anyone else—and in their place are individuals discovering what it means to be members of a choir, to move in procession as well as to make music together. Communion, in other words, becomes a way of life. And it is communion, carefully and sometimes painfully learned in the *Purgatorio*, that becomes the sublime play of paradise. Dante cannot take this in all at once, even after the transformation of heart and mind attained along the terraces of the mountain. He must grow in vision, learn gradually to look into the sun without being blinded, to dance without having to watch his steps. And so the blessed condescend to his mortal limitations, appearing to him in the concentric spheres of the material heaven, initiating him gradually into the life of the Trinity. Although the blessed are still marked by some of the particularities of their earthly selves, it is primarily the “new life” of eternity that they open up. Theology increasingly maps the terrain, describing the contours of mystery. Light plays over light, and the only boundary is love. Dante tries in the end to figure it all out; he characterizes himself as a geometer determined to square the circle. But grace overwhelms his intellect in the final moment of the text, even as it rescued him in the dark wood at the outset, so that all he can do in conclusion is acknowledge heaven’s conquest of his mortal powers. The rest is silence.

Or is it? Instead of the silence that St. Paul imposed upon his rapture into the third heaven, Dante turns his ineffable experience into language, into a poem of 14,233 lines, written in the Florentine dialect that would in time (thanks to him) become Italian, and all of it composed in interlocking three-line stanzas called *terzine* or tercets, which rhyme *aba, bcb, cdc* for one hundred cantos. The rest, in other words, is not silence; it is a narrative poem, a story.

The fiction of the *Comedy* is that during Holy Week of the year 1300 Dante was rescued by the ancient pagan poet Virgil, descended into hell on the evening of Good Friday, emerged on the shores of purgatory at Easter dawn, and was enraptured to the Pauline “third heaven” three days later, now no longer under the wing of Virgil but guided by one of the blessed, his earthly love, Beatrice. Out of this experience, he wrote the poem.

This is the claim of the *Comedy*, but the reality of Dante’s circumstances in actually coming to write the text is no less interesting. In fact, during Holy Week of the year 1300, he was, at the age of thirty-five, a still young poet on his way to public office in Florence and a place of promise in its affairs. Two years later, however, he was brought up on false charges, a victim of the papacy as well as of power struggles within Florence. For the rest of his life he

moved between the cities of central and northern Italy; if legend is to be believed, he even journeyed as far north as Paris and Oxford. During this period of roughly twenty years, from 1302 until his death in Ravenna in 1321, he learned the difficulty of climbing another man's stairs and the unpleasant taste of another man's bread, to quote the "prophecy" of his exile in *Paradiso* 17. But he also engaged in a number of ambitious writing projects that suggest the range of his talents and concerns: the *De Vulgari eloquentia*, a defense of the vernacular tongue written in Latin to impress the scholars he was trying to win over; the *Convivio*, an attempt, through both poetry and prose, at serious philosophical reflection, composed in Italian so that it might be read by "women no less than men, a vast number of both sexes, whose language is not that acquired through education, but the vernacular" (*Convivio* 1.9); and the *Monarchia*, a treatise on world government that argues for the revival of the ideal of a universal empire (and therefore an end to the hatefulness of politics as usual that he himself had come to know at the hands of his fellow Florentines).

Some time between 1307 and 1314 Dante began to write a poem that would incorporate almost everything he had attempted before at the same time that it would set out for new territory. He would call it his *Comedy*, or *Commedia*, no doubt in contrast to the "alta tragedia" (*Inf.* 20.113) of Virgil's epic, the *Aeneid*. It would occupy the years that remained until his death in 1321. We can only speculate about the actual inspiration for his work, whether it first came to him as an idea, in a dream, or, more mysterious still, as a vision. Some have dismissed the *Comedy* as an extended grudge against Florence, as if writing well were Dante's best revenge against the city that exiled him. Others, Harold Bloom, for instance, have seen its origins in the quest for originality itself, in the heretical desire to be self-begotten.

For myself, however, I like to imagine the inspiration for the *Comedy* taking place in circumstances not unlike the ones Augustine describes in the *Confessions*. Imagine it: Dante paces the precincts of someone else's garden, in a state of turmoil over all that he had lost, unable to bring to fruition any of the works he had set out to write. Suddenly, he hears a voice that may come from the house next door or perhaps from deep within himself; it repeats the refrain "Take it and read, take it and read." Deciding that the words are to be taken literally, he rushes to the book he had been reading but set aside in his distraction—the book that would not only open him to himself but lead him out of the prison of the dark wood.

Following breathlessly behind the poet in his rush to obey the command "Take it and read," the Dante scholar strains to see the title of that crucial

text. Many have thought it to be the *Aeneid*, which Dante cites and rewrites throughout the long course of the *Comedy* and whose author serves as guide for two-thirds of the way. Others have imagined the book to be none other than Augustine's *Confessions*, with its story of conversion and its exploration of authorial double identity—the self that was and the self that now, looking backward, tells the tale of transformation. One could also argue that the book neglected and now taken up and read with new eyes is Dante's own *Vita Nuova*, the “libello” of his youth, in which he described the impact upon him of a person named Beatrice and vowed someday “to compose concerning her what has never been written in rhyme of any woman” (*Vita Nuova* 42).⁶

I want to suggest the possibility, however, that the book Dante picked up was the Bible, the divine text that enabled him to see his own exile in terms of the exodus and to configure his own story of deliverance according to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is in no way meant to downplay the importance of other texts; clearly, the command to “take it and read” impelled the poet to turn to a whole array of books, including not only narratives like the *Aeneid* and the *Confessions*, but works like Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* or, for that matter, the theological writings of the poet's near contemporaries, Aquinas and Bonaventure. Nor should we forget the many accounts of voyage through the afterlife that enjoyed such popularity in the centuries before Dante.

But what interests me is the particular relation Dante had with the scriptures and the extent to which he indeed “took up” the Bible in the *Comedy*, not only as a source of citation and allusion (as it was indeed for almost any other work in the Middle Ages) but as a model for his own enterprise—the writing of a “scriptural” poem that he himself did not scruple to call “sacred” (*Par.* 25.1) and that later generations would call “divine.” The goal of these Stone Lectures, therefore, will be to explore the interface between God's Book and Dante's poem. My hope is to introduce the *Comedy* and, in so doing, to convince my Princeton audience to “take it and read, take it and read.” But what I really want to do is show you the stars.

⁶ *La Vita Nuova*, trans. Barbara Reynolds (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1966), 99.

BOOK REVIEWS

Gillespie, Thomas W. *The First Theologians: A Study in Early Christian Prophecy*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994. Pp. xiv + 286. \$24.99.

"The Lord told me" is a well-worn yet troubling phrase from the well-meaning parishioner that every pastor has to confront. Indeed the charismatic movement of recent decades has made it impossible for many in the church to sit comfortably with tidy notions of "revelation" ending with the writing of the New Testament or of preaching as the exposition only of the originally Spirit-inspired authors. Does the "Lord" continue to speak today, and if so, who hears this "voice of God"?

Thomas Gillespie does not purport to provide conclusive answers or pretend that his thoroughgoing analysis of "prophecy" in the Pauline churches can be translated directly in our era into definitive guidelines for discerning the voice of God. Yet his deeply informed, often insightful exegesis of prophecy in 1 Corinthians and related Pauline passages goes a long way in helping contemporary Christians understand "what the early Christian prophets were doing when they were prophesying" (p. 1) and how the Spirit conceivably might be acting and speaking today.

After an introductory survey of the scholarship of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, where Ernst Käsemann's pioneer profile of the prophets as the original interpreters of Jesus and hence the "first theologians" forms an indelible impression on Gillespie's own querying, Gillespie answers (pp. 33-63) by making a convincing case for the heuristic value of 1 Corinthians in illuminating all of the Pauline literature as well as potentially other instances of prophesying in the New Testament. Drawing upon history-of-religions research, Gillespie argues that 1 Corinthians contains Paul's own understanding of the *intrinsic nature* of Christian prophecy, as the apostle counters widely shared yet "distinctive" notions of prophecy in the Greco-Roman religious milieu with the *singular* gospel of the cross and resurrection of Christ. In this reading of 1 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians (already with its traditional "testing" of prophecy in the gathered assemblies [5:16-22]), and Romans (to a church Paul did not found yet which recognizes "acknowledged standards"/"the analogy of faith" in discerning prophecy [12:6]) provide telling ideological as well as chronological and geographical brackets. Gillespie's thesis is that in both churches, Paul defends a widely evidenced exercise of prophecy that is grounded in the heart of the gospel itself and must in some sense meet the

specific, more pervasive criteria of a "traditioned faith." But if that be true, then the charism of prophesying is not just an exotic epiphenomenon flowing willy-nilly from the general milieu and held in check by some Christianized form of it; nor is it primarily a product of Paul's missiological priorities. Rather, this phenomenon is itself a "graced" expression of a common subject matter, namely, a "form of gospel proclamation."

Gillespie then turns in the remainder of his study to 1 Corinthians to test his thesis, focusing first on 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. Most believers, undoubtedly reflecting their cultural heritage (cf. 1 Cor. 12:2), had maintained that genuine prophesying was authenticated by an *unintelligible* speaking in tongues. But when one group of prophesiers "legitimated" their prophecy of "Jesus be accursed" (12:3—perhaps with a corresponding denigration of the earthly Jesus in promoting an "exaltation christology" or in denying "the resurrection of the dead" [15:12]), a deep crisis of confidence in the community's formal understanding of prophecy was created. Paul carefully separates the Spirit-inspired intelligible speech of "prophecy" from the unintelligible speech of prayer by distancing "tongues" in all three lists of charisms (12:8–11, 28, 29–30) from significant communal functionaries (vv. 28, 28b–29, 30). Gillespie's distinctive contribution, however, is to link the confession "Jesus is Lord" (12:3), as the *material* adjudication of genuine prophetic utterance, to the "One who manifests himself in the proclamation of the gospel" (p. 89). In other words, all genuine prophesying is *an intelligible explication or expansion of the gospel proclamation*, since it is precisely the saving events of the cross and resurrection of the earthly *Jesus* that effected his exaltation as the Lord who now elicits this particular confession.

Gillespie devotes the last three chapters to substantiating this critical linkage. In the pivotal "Prophecy and Wisdom: 1 Corinthians 2:6–16," he demonstrates that the "wisdom of God" of 1 Corinthians 2 constitutes the heart of the charisms of "the word of wisdom"/"knowledge" or of "prophecy" of 1 Cor. 12:8, 10. Over against a rival "wisdom" of certain "spirituals" in Corinth who also lay claim to Spirit inspiration as true redemptive power, Paul counters with the wisdom of the "foolishness of the cross" and weaves together arguments in parlaying the dispute over genuinely inspired Spirit speech, which he will later capitalize upon in 1 Corinthians 12–14. The linchpin of these two sections of 1 Corinthians is the interpretation of the terms "revelation"/"to reveal" (*apokalypsis/apokalyptein* [2:10; 14:30]) and "mystery" (*mystērion* [2:1, 7; 13:2; 14:2]). Gillespie shows that "the revelation of the Son of God/Jesus Christ" to Paul in Galatians (1:12, 16) entails its redemptive significance such that this revelation becomes the hermeneutical

event for all gospel proclamation, which continues this self-revealing of Christ. It is no surprise, then, that Paul should tie the seminal apostolic proclamation to the Corinthians to the "mystery of God" (1 Cor. 2:1) that unveils the crucifixion of the "Lord of glory" (2:8). Accordingly, when Paul follows his assertion in 2:7 ("we declare the wisdom of God which consists of the mystery that has been hidden" from "before the ages") with, "to us God has revealed this [mystery] through the Spirit . . . in order that we might understand the *gifts/gracious things bestowed on us by God*" (2:10-12 [emphasis mine]), it is not a far cry to see this same revelation determining the authenticity of every Spirit-inspired utterance that cries "Jesus is Lord" and "utters mysteries in the Spirit" (14:2; cf. 14:30 [*apokalyptein!*]).

In the last main chapter, Gillespie is at his persuasive best when he applies his thesis to 1 Corinthians 15. What is compelling here is the way the author can explain the relation of this passage to the rest of 1 Corinthians as well as exhibit, in the whole of chapter 15, a Spirit-inspired prophesying of Paul that epitomizes Gillespie's redefinition of prophecy: (1) In continuing the debate of chapters 12-14 ("What! Did the word of God originate with you . . . ?" [14:36]), Paul restates the basic kerygma (15:1-11) in (2) anticipating an answer to the false prophecy of verse 12—"there is no resurrection of the dead"—which he expounds upon at length in verses 13-49, before (3) presenting the special revelation or prophecy of the mystery [*mystērion*] of the resurrection of the dead given him by the Spirit in verses 50-57. There *is* a resurrection of the dead precisely because the kerygma already has implicit within it the realization of God's ultimate triumph in the restoration of all creation as prophesied in Isaiah 25 and Hosea 13, which are cited in the unveiling of the mystery (vv. 54-55). Paul's revelation of this mystery thus "unpacks" the kerygma (vv. 1-11), which is itself a fulfillment of the law and prophets testifying to it, that is, "according to the scriptures" (vv. 3b, 4b; cf. Rom. 3:21). Rather than tease some sense out of what appears to be hopelessly circular logic or appeal to some quasi-coherent apocalyptic worldview into which the circularity can somehow be resolved or trivialized (à la J.C. Beker et al.), Gillespie sees verses 12-49 reconnoitering the implications of the argument or revelatory rationale that is not made explicit until verses 50-57.

Perhaps the greatest strength of *The First Theologians* is to "demythologize" New Testament prophecy from essentially bizarre, "extraterrestrial" ecstasy to intelligible, even rational, theological and moral exposition of the implications of the gospel in the day-to-day flux of congregational life. Not all will accept his sharp distinction between "prophecy" and "tongues" or be content with the short shrift given to Paul's own ecstatic experiences (for 2 Cor.

12:1-5, see p. 191 n. 92). These objections notwithstanding, pastors do now have a clearer window (cf. 1 Cor 13:12) into a terra incognita and thus a firmer ground upon which to adjudicate such claims as the "Lord told me" without stooping to smug authoritarianism or biblical literalism. Just as importantly, Gillespie stirs visions of what prophetic ministries in our New Testament era might aspire to, rather than resorting *only* to the Old Testament classical prophets and "literalist" and "liberationist" models of their prophetic relevance, as is too often the case today.

But it is just here that we meet also the greatest weakness of the book. That prophetic inspiration often entails the unveiling of the mysteries of scripture as they relate to the kerygma Gillespie has established without a doubt. In the concluding chapter, which unfortunately reads more like an epilogue than the drawing together of the previous chapters, Gillespie contends that the activity of the Spirit can be discerned and validated by the "joint testimony" of the "church's *kerygma*, confession, and Scriptures" to the reality of Christ who transcends and yet "calls forth" the linguisticity of their interacting witness. What is especially refreshing here is Gillespie's attempt to locate objective meaning—and hence an inherent power of the gospel—in the text of Paul by appealing to Ricoeur's delineation of sense and of its reference as "the movement in which language transcends itself," rather than—as first priority—assigning determinancy of meaning to social location and experience. But more illumination here of prophetic "charismatic exegesis," as well as the exigencies of interpreting Paul as *scripture* in the church today, would do much to enhance Gillespie's provocative stirrings.

Nevertheless, to quote Ricoeur again, "Never does the interpreter get near to what his [*sic*] text says unless he lives in the aura of the meaning he is enquiring after" (*The Symbolism of Evil* [Beacon, 1969], p. 351). One has only to read *The First Theologians* to sense that, by any account, Gillespie has sojourned intimately in the aura of the prophets.

David P. Moessner
Columbia Theological Seminary

Capps, Donald. *The Child's Song: The Religious Abuse of Children*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995. Pp. xvii + 188. \$15.99.

Donald Capps, William Harte Felmeth Professor of Pastoral Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, needs no introduction to those who have had an interest in pastoral care and counseling. He is the author of an impressive list of books and articles on various dimensions of pastoral care, including subjects like pastoral care and preaching, pastoral care and life cycle

theory, and pastoral care and the Bible. Capps adds to the breadth of his work in the present volume by dealing with the role of religious beliefs and practices in the abuse of children.

The Child's Song is a disturbing book. It is also a sensitive and carefully crafted work. Capps' basic point is that an untold number of children have their spirits crushed by the abuse perpetrated by adults, even by well-intentioned adults. He centers on the way in which religion often plays into, and even legitimizes, that abuse by its theological affirmations. At the core of these affirmations is the belief that children are sinful and rebellious and that their wills must be broken, so that they conform more closely to the will of God. Capps is talking not just about children who have been subject to obvious and systematic abuse but about all children who have had their spirits crushed by the parental use of "poisonous pedagogies" that destroy "the spontaneous feelings of children."

Capps develops his thesis about the relation between religion and abuse in stages. He relies on the contemporary work of Alice Miller to uncover the often hidden prevalence of child abuse in our time. He then elucidates the vicious-cycle character of child abuse by turning to Augustine. Using Augustine's *Confessions*, Capps describes the abuse that Augustine suffered at the hands of harsh teachers and shows how he passed the abuse on to his son Adeodatus. In the third chapter, Capps crystallizes the way in which religion has contributed to the suffering of children. He spends a good amount of time showing that religion has supported the physical punishment of children. He goes on to elaborate the more radical—and more disturbing—idea that certain religious ideas and beliefs cause "emotional torment and are therefore inherently abusive." He cites belief in the virginal conception of Jesus as an example of a religious idea that tends to "place a veil of secrecy" over a traumatic event, thereby encouraging traumatized children to do the same.

Capps devotes chapters to three more dimensions of religion and child abuse before he lays out a psychological and theological possibility of healing. He deals with the lasting effects of childhood trauma by maintaining that the Letter to the Hebrews, more than any other biblical book, lends support to an abusive situation by promoting intellectual heteronomy instead of intellectual autonomy. He then turns to the story of Abraham and Isaac and deals with the sacrificial impulse found in many religions. He shows that the human need to sacrifice, which is an extreme form of abuse, is often projected onto God in order to make it a justified necessity. Finally, Capps illuminates the damage done to the self as a consequence of abuse by considering the possibility that

Jesus' "adoption" of a heavenly Father was a reaction to the self-negating obscurity of his earthly father.

As indicated above, *The Child's Song* is not a comfortable book to read. I assume that it was not a comfortable book for Capps to write. In any case, he wants to engage the reader in ongoing dialogue, as, for example, when he deals with Augustine's suffering at the hands of punitive teachers. "Tell me," he says, "if I am not correct in asserting that the tragedy began there."

We have much to learn from *The Child's Song*, especially if we are oblivious to the shadow side of our Christian faith. What troubles me about Capps' book is that he never makes a distinction between discipline and abuse. Consequently, I am left with the impression that any word or deed that chastises or rebukes is an instance of abuse. That is painting with a pretty broad brush. It tends to eliminate one whole side of the parental task, since most children, at least some of the time, need discipline as well as love.

In Capps' concern to expose the abusive side of our faith, he may actually end up with a truncated Word of God, that is, a Word without law. This possibility appears at various points in his discussion, but nowhere more explicitly than when he says of Martin Luther: He decided "to believe the biblical words that consoled and reassured him and to disbelieve those that condemned him, doing so on the grounds that these condemnatory words no longer applied to him, as he was now living in a state of grace and no longer under the law." Breaking the paradox of law and gospel, even in the name of extricating our faith from abusive tendencies, may be throwing the baby out with the bath. We need the law to reveal abuse just as Capps needed the law to write such a timely and disturbing book.

LeRoy Aden

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

Capps, Donald. *Agents of Hope: A Pastoral Psychology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995. Pp. 180. \$13.00.

"My purpose in this book is to explore the role pastors play as agents of hope." Don Capps fulfills this purpose ably. In doing so, he accomplishes two further goals: giving practical help for pastors seeking to offer hope and addressing a critical question facing clergy, that of their unique province among secular caregivers. Capps states unequivocally: "To be a pastor means to be eternally hopeful." While other helping professions may think and act with hope, the distinctiveness of clergy is that "pastors are hopeful by virtue of

their profession.” This provides pastors with a clear and powerful statement of professional identity and does so in language that is deeply rooted in scripture and theology: “Hope” is a word that resounds deeply in Christian tradition and carries with it rich imagery and narrative.

Having offered this brief introduction, Capps moves immediately in the first chapter to three case studies, beginning his exploration with pastoral praxis. The case studies are notable for their accurate portrayals of the morally and psychologically complex situations that pastors often face.

In the second chapter Capps gives an account of the developmental origins of hope, drawing deeply on Erik Erikson and psychoanalytic tradition. Here Capps makes a profound move from psychological thought to theological insight. Psychologically speaking, “what the infant desires, the mother desires to provide.” Theologically speaking, “our desire for God is reciprocated by God’s desire for us.” The parallels between fundamental psychological processes and the experience of God are skillfully explored, using suggestive more than explicit moves, allowing the reader to construct the connections.

Chapter three looks at some aspects of the experience of hope. Hope is defined as “the perception that what is wanted will happen.” There may or may not be any proof, and others may be skeptical. Hope is fueled by a desire that can be named and that is lasting. It is a response to an inner sense that something is missing and involves a “*self*-projection.” “By hoping, we project *ourselves* into the future and envision our existence being different from what it is in the present.” Such hope can have the effect of actually accomplishing change. “By projecting a future, hope alters the present.” Yet hope also involves risk, the risk of failure and shame.

Chapter four presents a detailed case study that illustrates the possible conflict between the moral and the hopeful. Capps’ discussion of this case concludes with a section on “hope, love and self-obligation,” in which he discusses the moral importance of self-obligation. Capps gives a convincing and carefully reasoned ethical account of why the “highest obligation” of the subject of this case study is to be true to herself. In this case, therefore, the hopeful and the moral can be seen as compatible.

In the fifth chapter Capps discusses three attitudes that undermine hope. Despair, in contrast to hope, is “the perception that what we hoped for will not happen . . . in spite of the fact that I very much desire it.” The second threat is apathy, the stark absence of desire. The third is shame; the fact that hope involves self-projection means that unrealized hopes can bring injury to the self.

Chapter six discusses the “allies of hope”: trust, patience, and modesty, which are roughly correlated with the threats to hope. In contrast to despair, “trust has to do with the assurance that everything is and will be all right, that there is an underlying order to all things, that we cannot fall out of this world.” Trust also involves entrusting ourselves to a reliable other. Again, Capps alludes to a divine other, who is at the heart of the underlying order of all things and to whom we can entrust ourselves.

Patience, the second ally of hope, is the “assurance that the hoped-for outcome is worth the frustration and therefore keeps us steadfast in our hope.” This contrasts with apathy, which has given up all desire for the hoped-for object. Finally, the third ally is modesty, “the letting go of the failed hopes and the self who envisioned them,” and is correlated with shame. Modesty is meant in the sense of “moderation or the avoidance of excesses or extremes” and emphasizes the grounding of hope in reality rather than fantasy. Modesty “enables us to see that the failure of our hopes is no reason for us to feel humiliated or ashamed.”

The final chapter gives an extremely interesting account of the “reframing of time.” Capps first describes a psychotherapeutic method that involves asking clients to imagine themselves in the hoped-for future and to describe the steps taken to arrive there. A second method involves “revising the past.” The past is always open to new interpretation in the light of a present-day repentance. Capps makes the provocative claim that “the past is as open and possibility-filled as the future.” This is because “what is always open about the past is the meaning or significance we assign to it.”

Capps gives us a pastorally useful discussion of hope that is both practical and thought-provoking. Perhaps most significant, this book draws the reader into self-reflection, a pondering of one’s own pastoral responsibility as a bearer of hope.

Susan J. Dunlap
Duke Divinity School

Loder, James E., and W. Jim Neidhardt. *The Knight’s Move: The Relational Logic of the Spirit in Theology and Science*. Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1992. Pp. xv + 350. \$24.95.

James E. Loder and W. Jim Neidhardt have completed a major project with the publishing of *The Knight’s Move*. With historical and philosophical sensitivity, the authors treat one of the most intriguing intellectual and

spiritual issues of our day: the relationship between the knowing process in the natural sciences and in theology. In an effort to show the broad influence of Søren Kierkegaard, the authors schematize an epistemological and experiential model that they believe is most profoundly expressed in his work. This becomes the focus of a very rich and compelling dialogical approach to the relationship between theology and the natural sciences.

The adventurously large body of material covered—including complementarity in physics, paradox in theology, issues in human developmental psychology, and still other domains—reinforces the comprehensiveness of application of their thesis, which is to show how the knowing process and the nature of human experience instantiate the nature of reality itself. The whole of this reality, they claim, is only fully understood by invoking the Creator God who is relational (trinitarian) in nature.

Jim Neidhardt, a physicist at the New Jersey Institute of Technology until his death in 1992, was well known to those who have been laboring in this interdisciplinary area in recent years. James Loder, Professor of the Philosophy of Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary and trained in both psychology and theology, has explored extensively the processes and structures of human understanding and the nature of human transformations. Together Loder and Neidhardt were eminently qualified to take on the task represented in *The Knight's Move*.

The authors take up many of the perennial dualisms found in Western thought—for example, the dualisms of thought/world, mind/brain, creation/creator—and unfold a theology of the Holy Spirit as the largest possible context for understanding the experience of polarity. In their thesis about relationality they assert an “objectivity in self-knowledge, and self-involvement in objectivity,” which at the most inclusive level invokes God’s self-involvement in the created order, best understood in trinitarian terms. The Holy Spirit is God’s self-relatedness.

The relational mode of explanation for the structure of reality, in which self and world are dynamically and intrinsically related, is conveyed through “the strange loop” model and illustrated by the mobius band. The “asymmetrical bipolarity” thus depicted reinforces the claim that “the intelligible order of reality . . . resides in the relationship between the mind and nature, the observer and the observed.” This insight finds its richest psychological and theological explication in the life and work of Kierkegaard, whose influence extends to physicist Niels Bohr and theologians Karth Barth and Thomas Torrance.

The book is driven by the effort to make the authors' christological-incarnational vision intelligible both epistemically and metaphysically. One of the fundamental implications of this vision is its rejection of otherworldliness regarding matters of the spirit. The bipolar relationality helps us to overcome the two-worlds perspective within tradition, which springs from the experience of apparent dualities. It does this by showing the deeper unity underlying the duality: "bi-polar relationality understandings arise when inquiry into a situation or object discloses that its nature is manifested in two very different, contextually incompatible . . . perceptual levels—both of which are required in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation or object under investigation" (p. 54). Thus, the authors suggest that the intellectual vision must comprehend paradox (the objects of knowing cannot be sufficiently understood on a single plane) but never belie the fundamental reality, which is not duality but relationality. The latter indicates a unitary structure of being, albeit differentiated in character.

Thus, the logic of the incarnation sheds light on the widest range of intellectual activity. This sets up a bold proposal for placing incarnationalism in the mix as a competing framework for understanding all domains of human knowledge and experience. It also affirms that science and religion (though having different disciplinary histories in our culture) fundamentally depend on a common bedrock supporting each. In the end (even if this is not the main goal) we find that the authors have made a case for the reinsertion of theology into academic culture.

If I were to name potential drawbacks to this book, they would be its unorthodox manner of presentation (its discussion of epistemology is not conventional) and its density. However, the effort by the educated nonspecialist will surely be rewarded. The difficulty of some passages on first reading will often become clear later as the authors express the same theme in territory more familiar to the reader. I found that the science and theology were not themselves too technical, but the epistemological exposition was challenging.

This volume makes a very important contribution, especially to the burgeoning dialogue between theology and science, and it has yet to be fully appreciated by scholars working in this area.

W. Mark Richardson
The Graduate Theological Union

Wyckoff, D. Campbell, and George Brown, Jr. *Religious Education, 1960-1993: An Annotated Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995. Pp. xii + 325. \$75.00.

Periodically one encounters a volume that is so unique and whose contribution is so significant that the reader cannot put it down. This is such a book. For people whose deep commitment is to the field of religious or Christian education, it prompts that type of acceptance.

To cover the literature of the discipline is an immense assignment in itself. However, to attempt to summarize 1169 volumes, state their theses, and evaluate them in an irenic and even-handed manner is a formidable task. This volume's very existence is testimony to the fact that Wyckoff, Thomas W. Synnott Professor of Christian Education Emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary, and Brown, Dean of the Faculty and Assistant Professor of Christian Education at Western Theological Seminary, have an exceptional grasp on the literature in their vocational discipline. The volume is the product of a lengthy and continual immersion by the compilers in the materials available.

The opening chapter, "Recent Religious Education: A Critical Survey," establishes the context by updating the reader regarding the literary climate of the various areas presented in the chapters that follow. This is a most valuable essay. It focuses immediate attention on the breadth, vigor, and fairness of the reviewers. Most individuals in theological education could gather the material that should be critiqued. However, it is the finely honed level of expertise in a variety of disciplines that enhances these evaluations. As one who has personally reviewed upwards of two hundred education monographs, I possess a small appreciation for the strength and power of Wyckoff and Brown's work. It is from this reservoir of remembrance that I salute their rare contribution.

The focused areas around which these books are gathered are as follows: foundations of religious education; educational theory; religious-education theory; administration of religious education; programs, curriculum, and method; religion and the school; and religion and higher education. What ensues is a cataloging of the primary monographs from the Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant "libraries," including all the theological schools of thought within these three. Seminary-journal articles and other theological materials are included. Seminal books and journal writings on these themes from a secular perspective enrich it even further. The result is a compendium

of considerable scope and merit. We are the beneficiaries of Wyckoff and Brown's painstaking labor.

Warren S. Benson
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Childs, Brian H., and David W. Waanders, eds. *The Treasure of Earthen Vessels: Explorations in Theological Anthropology in Honor of James N. Lapsley*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994. Pp. xii + 276. \$19.99.

This Festschrift to honor the teaching, writing, and pastoral career of James N. Lapsley deliberately attempts to further Lapsley's own life project. The editors, both former students of Lapsley now teaching pastoral theology in seminaries of the Reformed theological tradition, state: "In our view, Jim Lapsley's efforts in *Salvation and Health* to develop an understanding of human experience that has theological integrity and that incorporates depth-level analyses of 'human being' have not reached as wide a hearing as these efforts deserve. The need for a thoroughly developed theological anthropology remains of critical importance to the church."

On the last page of the book, Lapsley invites all pastoral theologians to "hold on to their heritage of truth seeking through reflection on practice in light of tradition." One of the strengths of this volume is that every author works with the same three foci of pastoral theology: religious experience based in pastoral-care ministry, dynamic psychology, and the Christian theological tradition. Lapsley tried to fulfill this task most clearly in his 1972 book *Salvation and Health*, which he says was "essentially a psychoanalytic ego psychology model that was linked to a Whiteheadian universe by means of the idea of participation."

Many of the authors present complex constructive proposals about how to find an adequate theological anthropology that draws on the insights of dynamic psychology, and thus each deserves study in her or his own right: James Loder, Don Browning, Donald Capps, Herbert Anderson, Christie Neuger, James Emerson, John Cobb, Charles Gerkin, and John Patton. They struggle with such concepts as spirit, soul, self, and psyche to understand the human person. Other authors raise substantive questions about Lapsley's proposal and attempt to extend it to be more inclusive of gender, aging, disabilities, ethnicity, and culture (Brian Childs, Emma Justes, Freda Gardner, and Rodney Hunter.) These struggles with issues of race, gender, and class have been underrepresented in the history of pastoral theology.

Two chapters can serve as illustrations of the volume. John Patton responds sensitively to the problem of cheap forgiveness in situations of extreme evil such as sexual violence. He distinguishes between the fragile internal processes of healing that sometimes lead to forgiveness, and the demand for forgiveness that sometimes contributes to further abuse against the victims of violence. Patton's revision of the doctrine of forgiveness illustrates the task of pastoral theology to attend to what "has been lost or gone underground in contemporary theological understanding."

Christie Neuger explores the current research about the religious formation of women in a sexist culture and suggests that culture forces "women [to] look in a distorted mirror as they seek to discover who they are." In her practice of pastoral care, Neuger has learned to ask women, "How do you think that God perceives you at this point in time?" By reversing the usual pastoral question, "How do you perceive God?" Neuger finds that seekers are more thoughtful and more likely to touch deep levels of suffering in their lives and thus find healing through community.

This volume is a worthy tribute to James Lapsley, who has taught and led all of us in pastoral theology by his careful thinking. Herein are laid out the issues of inclusiveness and pluralism, of social construction of experience, and of appropriate understandings of the biblical understandings of soul and spirit. We will need to ponder this collection over time to fulfill the task of pastoral theology to find a more "thoroughly developed theological anthropology" for the church.

James Newton Poling
Colgate Rochester Divinity School

Cousar, Charles B., Beverly R. Gaventa, J. Clinton McCann, Jr., and James D. Newsome. *Texts for Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary Based on the NRSV—Year C*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994. Pp. ix + 621. \$32.99.

Texts for Preaching—Year C is a good and helpful book that should be in preachers' libraries. I am afraid that, as a homiletician, I assumed that a "lectionary commentary" would take the worst elements of lectionary and commentary, and combine them. I am most pleasantly surprised. The lectionary has vanquished all other methods of organizing a preaching ministry within mainstream churches. And scores of lectionary aids have emerged. Any preacher who looks upon these aids, though, as a shortcut to the sermon, walks on dangerous ground. The sermon must still grow out of the genuine encounter between text, preacher, people, occasion, and Spirit. *Texts for*

Preaching rightly takes this encounter seriously, seeking to draw preachers into their biblical work rather than show them a way around it.

Preparing a commentary on some 260 texts is a massive undertaking. Our four authors are up to the task. In my journey through the book, I found helpful material again and again. The authors let us know when the text is tough and when its message has been oversimplified by interpreters. The best I can do in this limited space is to offer a sample—a few comments I found particularly helpful.

Charles B. Cousar, writing on 1 Corinthians 13, suggests that the text contains:

beautiful words, but they are not written to idealize the qualities of love or praise its virtues. They have an earthy, practical force to them, precisely because they are sent to a quarrelsome people who need to know their fervent religiosity is [worthless] apart from a new relationship to one another. (p. 128)

I have yet to hear a good sermon on this text. These comments could help.

On Matthew 6 Beverly R. Gaventa writes that the passage:

warns against a manipulative piety that . . . is carried out for an audience other than God. No one in his or her right mind sets out to be a hypocrite. People are simply drawn into situations or habits where their practice of religion is meant to have an impact on others . . . until the need for human approval subtly becomes the idol to which worship is offered. (p. 187)

Selah! Once, speaking before a group, I indicated my uneasiness with football players who kneel in the end zone to pray after scoring a touchdown. Everyone in the room disagreed with me. Gaventa encourages me to take up this question again in light of Matthew's text. Consider also this line from her commentary on Luke 15: "The generosity lavished on the son who was lost outside the household is now extended to the son who is lost within the household" (p. 227). That line, and the reasoning behind it, will no doubt transform many a sermon on the prodigal son.

James D. Newsome, in his commentary on Hosea 11, offers a touching portrayal of a God who suffers (p. 452), and he crafts a nifty piece on Nehemiah 8, in which he writes:

This event is a milestone in understanding the authority of the written word, in that it is not only read but interpreted. . . . More than translation from one language to another is involved here. [There is more concern]

with giving the *meaning* of the Hebrew original than with transmitting its exact words. Thus, the "sermon" is born. (pp. 113-14)

We preachers are grateful. Perhaps the people are too.

J. Clinton McCann, Jr. writes on the Psalms. It is good that the Psalms are included. Many lectionary study guides leave them out, believing, with some justification, that the lectionary planners did not anticipate that the Psalms would actually be preached. The hope here is that more and more preachers will see the Psalms as interesting material for homiletical treatment. Psalm 82, for example, is a text that is grounded in mythology and that provides us with rich and rhythmic language about the "shaking of the foundations." McCann writes:

Without adopting the ancient Near Eastern world view, we can still appreciate the conviction that injustice destroys the world. In fact, we can see it happening around us. . . . The fact that the foundations of the earth are still shaking in our day suggests again that Ps. 82 does not literally describe the death of the gods, but rather denies them ultimacy. (p. 423)

The Word shines through. It shines through the whole book.

Are there weaknesses? Yes. There are errors and at times the kind of woodenness that comes from hurried writing. The book, by definition, suffers from the same problems the lectionary does, including texts untimely ripped from context, what Eugene Lowry calls "superficial connections" between texts, and a too facile preconception about what preaching is and how it is done. *Texts for Preaching* "provides an orientation" to the sometimes isolated texts from the lectionary and then offers "theological reflections" on them. The result of this is generally some "point" that the preacher is then to preach. This is a very narrow approach to the relationship between text and sermon and the weekly task of preaching.

For example, the commentary suggests that the texts for the Third Sunday of Advent are dominated by the theme of joy because the Lord is coming. This joy comes as surprise; it is not "superficial happiness," it is an "eschatological joy." But joy does not "dominate" the Gospel text for the day. John's sermon in Luke 3 (think of the fire-breathing preacher in *Cotton Patch Gospel!*) is miles away from any understanding of joy that congregations might have. So the preacher must help people understand "eschatological joy." Have the authors a clue as to how one does that? It is a very difficult task. The book is designed to "fill that space between a critical commentary and the sermon itself." The problem, however, is not theological; it is homiletical: How can

this be shaped into a message that can be heard and appropriated for living? And there is little help for preachers here.

There is also little attention given to genre as it affects the sermon. For example, while *Texts for Preaching* includes the Psalms, there is no hint that a psalm-based sermon might look any different from any other sermon. The method is the same: Derive a point; then preach. The rhythm of the psalm (and consequently the sermon) can easily be lost that way.

So, this is a book that should not work. But it does, in its own way. It provides generally helpful and often brilliant reflections on the great variety of texts found in the scriptures. It offers a vast body of material designed to “spark the imagination” of the preacher. *Texts for Preaching* is well situated in that landscape between critical commentary and sermon, and it does serve to bring text and sermon closer together—but seldom close enough to spark.

Joseph R. Jeter, Jr.
Brite Divinity School
Texas Christian University

Charlesworth, James H., and Walter P. Weaver, eds. *Images of Jesus Today*. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994. Pp. xxi + 119. \$14.00.

The great value of this slender volume is that it introduces to a broad audience some of the central issues in the vigorous debate concerning the historical Jesus that has erupted in the last few years.

Following a brief foreword by Weaver, Charlesworth presents a chapter entitled “Jesus Research Expands with Chaotic Creativity.” After sketching “twenty areas of consensus,” the Princeton Seminary professor reviews four challenges to the consensus: the Cynic Jesus, the noneschatological Jesus, the extracanonical Jesus, and the Jesus of sociology.

The second of these challenges is strongly represented in chapter two, “Jesus and Eschatology: A Reassessment,” by Marcus J. Borg of Oregon State University. Borg vehemently argues that the twentieth-century consensus established by Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer, namely, that Jesus’ thinking was dominated by the expectation that God was about to establish his rule by holding the last judgment, is crumbling and can no longer be properly designated a consensus. Scholars who still adhere to the portrayal of an eschatological Jesus, he claims, ignore the fact that the old consensus was built primarily on the future Son of man sayings, which are now broadly dismissed as secondary. Many recent studies suggest that wisdom, not apocalyptic material, represents the authentic layer of Jesus material; Borg finds it difficult

to believe that Jesus could have been both a teacher of subversive wisdom and a prophet of the end of the world. After surveying six recent "profiles" of Jesus by E. P. Sanders, Burton Mack, Richard Horsley, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, John Dominic Crossan, and himself, he notes that a new consensus seems to be emerging: Four of the six (excluding Sanders and Mack) see Jesus as attempting to transform his world.

In chapter three, "Jesus, Itinerant Cynic or Israelite Prophet?" Richard Horsley (of the University of Massachusetts) begins with a critique of Mack's Cynic Jesus and of the assumptions of other researchers and proceeds to sketch his own reading of the evidence. Jesus was a prophet engaged in the renewal of Israel. The Jerusalem saying of Q (Lk. 13:34-35//Mt. 23:37-39) was addressed by a Galilean prophet to the power elite centered in the national capital. The Pharisees were attacked as retainers of this elite. Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God was focused on the plight of the poor. His death was appropriately remembered by Q as a prophetic martyrdom.

In his discussion of "Jesus and the Politics of His Day," Doron Mendels of Hebrew University distinguishes between "earthly politics" and "spiritual politics" and argues that Jesus was concerned with the latter: "He wanted to be some kind of a spiritual king and not a physical and political one" (p. 107). The Gospels did not tone down an aggressive Jesus.

Charlesworth concludes that Horsley and others are right in stressing that Jesus was a prophet involved in the conflict between the ruling elite and the peasantry, but that it is a mistake to abstract Jesus from the pervasive apocalyptic eschatology of his day, as Borg, Horsley, and Crossan do.

One of the great values of this book is that the contributors interact with one another. It provides pastors, college and seminary students, and general readers with a helpful introduction to the "chaotic creativity" that characterizes the contemporary debate about Jesus.

Douglas R. A. Hare
Mount Desert, ME

Metzger, Bruce M., and Michael D. Coogan, eds. *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Pp. xxi + 910. \$49.95.

The expression "Companion to the Bible" became well known through a work published in 1945 that bore those words as its title. Its editor, T. W. Manson, divided the contributions into three parts: "The Book," "The Land and the People," and "The Religions of the Bible," with a general index indicating where specific items were to be found. Conversely, the main text of

the Oxford "Companion" presents terms and topics alphabetically and also includes a general index, which not only lists all the entries but directs the user to those that incorporate details lacking a headword.

Further comparison of contents of the two works causes some of the major developments that have taken place in biblical studies to stand out against interests or emphases current a half century ago. Especially striking is the space that *The Oxford Companion* accords to matters relating to biblical interpretation. Particularly helpful are the linguistic insights offered by Eugene A. Nida in two of the segments under "Translations." Related entries include "Feminism and the Bible," "Hermeneutics," "Interpretation, History of," "Modern Biblical Criticism," "Structuralism," and "Social Sciences and the Bible." Yet the Manson work contains information not to be had in *The Oxford Companion* about illumination of New Testament vocabulary through use of papyri. Through perusal of "Archaeology and the Bible" one gains appreciation of the advantages and limits of archaeological study for understanding the Bible. An ecumenical outreach is apparent in entries that range from "Eastern Orthodoxy and the Bible" (but no entry on Roman Catholicism and the Bible) through "Qur'an and the Bible, The" to "Christian Science and the Bible" and "Marx and the Bible."

Many a question finds an answer. Under "Books and Bookmaking in Antiquity" one is enlightened on the many forms of literary production in many lands and eras in the ancient world. Those who have used a method of random selection of a Bible passage for personal counsel or direction will discover that they are making use of a method called "Sortes Biblicae" or sortilege. Who is probably the only woman in the New Testament identified as an apostle? Check under "Junia." Under "Gutenberg . . ." one learns that only four of the parchment copies of the Bible printed by him exist in complete form, and only seventeen of the paper copies are complete. Mixed signals have been sent in the form of italics to readers of the King James Version, but the entry "Italics" dispatches an interesting clarification. Numerous misconceptions receive remedial treatment through the historical nuancing accorded such terms as "Bishop" and "Deacon." Correctives of popular misinformation about Mary Magdalene are to be found under her name.

Occasionally one wonders about principles of selection. For example, "Deborah" and "Miriam" come to the forefront, but not Jael or Hannah. "Concordances" and "Textual Criticism" are treated, but not grammars or lexicons. The approach to sexism is ambivalent: "Apollos" is worthy of a special entry, but not Priscilla. The entry "Miriam" begins with the defini-

tion: "Sister of Moses and Aaron," whereas "Moses" begins: "As primary leader of the Israelites . . ." There is no headword for Lydia and no mention of the importance of the traffic in purple associated with her, but "Bartholomew," about whom the New Testament records next to nothing, receives fifteen lines. The so-called *textus receptus* is left without a directive to the discussion provided by Bruce Metzger under "Manuscripts." Oddly, there is no separate entry for God, who must be researched through the index.

But editors have their reasons, and there is so much here not only for the general reader but also for students and specialists who require a work like this for tidy summaries of current trends and generally accurate information on a vast array of data. More than 250 scholars, recognized for their contributions to enlightened study of the Bible, have made this work possible. Appetites whetted by the entries will find the menu offerings in the bibliography very nourishing. And a series of Bible maps based on the renowned *Oxford Bible Atlas* crowns one of the finest investments a student of the Bible can make. Manson would tip his hat at this masterpiece.

Frederick W. Danker

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Ehrman, Bart D., and Michael W. Holmes, eds. *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995. Pp. xiv + 401. \$39.99.

This volume is a second *Festschrift* honoring Princeton's Bruce M. Metzger on his eightieth birthday. It contains twenty-two essays by experts on the various subjects. These essays deal with the Greek New Testament manuscripts (separate articles on the papyri, majuscules, minuscules, and lectionaries), the ancient versions (the Diatessaron, Syriac, Latin, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Georgian), patristic quotations (Greek, Latin, and Syriac), and methods and tools (scribal tendencies, analyzing and categorizing manuscripts, use of computers in textual criticism, recent critical editions, majority-text theory, thoroughgoing eclecticism, reasoned eclecticism, and the contribution of textual criticism to the study of the social history of early Christianity). Few of the essays set forth new theories, but most survey the progress that has been made during the last half century and, as the subtitle indicates, draw some conclusions about the present state of knowledge. Some make suggestions for further research. The volume is not a substitute for an introduction

to textual criticism, including that of Metzger, but is an excellent supplement to one. It should be a student's second book on the subject.

It is possible to review only a few of the individual studies. Eldon Epp, in his treatment of the papyri, seems to bemoan the fact that the discovery of these early manuscripts during the present century has done little to change the nineteenth-century text of Westcott and Hort. The reviewer would suggest, however, that they have done much to confirm a text similar to that one and to refute lingering claims of the originality of the Byzantine type of text, which is not represented among them.

Tjitze Baarda's chapter on the Syriac versions is somewhat out of place. Instead of surveying recent research, he traces variant readings in 1 Cor. 1:27 and Heb. 5:7 throughout the Syriac tradition and then makes a few observations about the nature of the four Syriac versions. The most important is that there was probably an Old Syriac version of the Epistles, which has been lost, but this claim is not new and has not been proven. Sebastian Brock's article on the Syriac fathers also deals with the Syriac versions in general and in this regard is quite helpful. He shows that it has now been proven from quotations in Philoxenus' own writings that the one surviving Syriac version of the sixth/seventh century is the Harklean rather than the Philoxenian.

Gordon Fee's essay on the Greek fathers contains very little that he has not written previously, but it is an excellent summary of what has been done and should be done in this area. James Royse's study of scribal tendencies calls into question some of the principles of internal evidence, especially that of preference for the shorter reading. He is quite correct to plead for studies of the habits of individual scribes rather than for generalizations about what scribes did.

Michael Holmes, in "Reasoned Eclecticism," argues that the theory should not be looked upon as an interim method but as a satisfactory, permanent method that only needs fine tuning. With this the reviewer heartily agrees. The text has remained stable for more than a century. As noted above, the discovery of the early papyri altered it but little. There is no reason to think that additional discoveries or additional studies will either.

Finally, the essay by Bart Ehrman on the text and social history does break new ground. If, in fact, not much additional progress can be made in restoring the original text, textual critics need to turn their attention to other matters. This Ehrman does by showing that variant readings reveal something about polemics with Jews and within the church, the suppression of women, the use of magic, the early Christian mission, and the use of scripture in liturgy and private devotions.

The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research is indeed a worthy tribute to one of the greatest textual critics of all time.

James A. Brooks
Bethel Theological Seminary

Adam, A. K. M. *What Is Postmodern Biblical Criticism?* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995. Pp. 96. \$10.00.

There are few tasks less enviable than trying to introduce postmodernism. There are so many issues, thinkers, and debates that come under the rubric "postmodern" that simply delimiting the field to be covered could take several volumes. Even then, writing that is most often called postmodern usually makes for very difficult reading. It is to A. K. M. Adam's great credit that he has produced a very accessible and informative introduction to postmodern biblical criticism.

Rather than define postmodernism (which, as Adam notes, is a very *modern* activity), Adam, who is Assistant Professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, begins by laying out some of the "textures of postmodernism" in chapter one. As the name suggests, postmodernism usually comes to us as a type of resistance to some aspect of modernity. Those aspects of modernity most important for Adam's purposes concern the development of spheres of disciplinary expertise within which appropriately educated and authorized scholars decisively present *the* meaning of biblical texts, correcting the errors of earlier interpreters. Against this background, Adam suggests that we think of postmodernism as "antifoundational," "antitotalizing," and "demystifying." Antifoundational thinkers refuse the quest to ground knowledge in ahistorical, unchanging truths accessible to all rational people regardless of context. The antitotalizing aspect of postmodernity resists the habits of modernity that lead us to desire grand unifying theories to hold everything together all at once. Another aspect of our totalizing habits is our willingness to exclude (or seek to destroy) what clearly does not fit our totalizing scheme. On first glance, demystifying seems to be a very modern practice. Historical critics sought to demystify the naive assumptions and allegorical mistakes of precritical readers. "The postmodern tendency toward demystifying addresses the demystifiers themselves: science, reason, and liberal democracy (to name three leading subjects of postmodern interrogation). In demystifying the assumptions of these institutions, critics are not undertaking a distinctively postmodern practice, but are directing a modern practice against itself (and therein lies the postmodernity of postmodern demystifying)" (p. 12).

Adam concludes this chapter with brief discussions of other postmodern characteristics, such as incredulity toward metanarratives and an eagerness to transgress contingent boundaries. This last characteristic nicely leads to chapter two's discussion of deconstruction.

Unfortunately for the beginning student, "deconstruction," which is often linked with (if not used synonymously with) postmodernity, is no more perspicacious than "postmodernism." As in chapter one, Adam deftly lays out some habits and practices often associated with deconstruction. This chapter has several concrete examples of the deconstructive tendency to read and interpret in ways that maximize differences, aporia, and conflicts. While Adam refutes the view that deconstruction is apolitical, he does not really address John Milbank's claim that the politics of deconstruction must be a politics of violence.

Chapter three looks at political criticism. This is the one aspect of postmodernity where biblical criticism has some pretty clear analogues in feminist criticisms and the work of scholars such as Norman Gottwald and Itumeleng Mosala. Adam introduces these issues by examining the various ways in which the term ideology can be used. Each of these uses (false consciousness, political agenda, social production of meaning) generates its own type of criticism.

The book closes with an extended invitation for biblical interpreters to step out beyond rigid disciplinary boundaries. "When interpreters obey the injunctions of the disciplines whose borders they are crossing, we may describe this dimension of postmodern biblical criticism as 'interdisciplinary'; when they mix discourses and genres without careful attention to the rules of the realms they invade, their interpretation is called not so much interdisciplinary as 'undisciplined.'" Having made this invitation, Adam then goes on to show that this need not result in critical anarchy. Instead, it could well have a liberating effect on the discipline.

Adam has done a fine job of producing in under one hundred pages a very serviceable introduction to postmodern habits of thought. Each chapter concludes with helpful pointers for those who wish to do further reading. While those already familiar with varieties of postmodernity will certainly be able to point out gaps and fissures in Adam's account, it would be churlish to do so here. For those who have been intimidated, baffled, or just plain curious about postmodernism and how it might shape the way the Bible is interpreted, this is a superb introduction.

Stephen Fowl
Loyola College in Maryland

Brown, Raymond E. *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1994. Pp. xlv + 1608. \$75.00.

Once again Raymond E. Brown has written a definitive work. Whoever intends to understand or deal with the death of Jesus or any important aspect of it will have to consult *The Death of the Messiah*. It is not so much a ground-breaking book as a ground-leveling book. That is, it is not the beginning of scholarship on the subject so much as the harvesting of scholarship. The bibliographical index contains fifteen hundred or more names. *The Death of the Messiah* is typically intelligent, erudite, comprehensive, and, in a meaningful and positive sense, conservative.

The volumes are a commentary on the passion narratives in the four Gospels, as the subtitle declares. Brown writes what he calls a "horizontal" rather than a "vertical" commentary. Instead of commenting on the passion narrative of each of the Gospels in order, he divides the narrative into discrete episodes or pericopes and works through each in the order Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. In fact, he tends to break episodes up into their smallest units in order to treat each unit, as represented in all four Gospels, before moving to the next. Thus "The Arrest of Jesus" (Mk. 14:43-52; Mt. 26:47-56; Lk. 22:47-53; Jn. 18:2-11) is broken into two basic parts, excluding the "Naked Flight of a Young Man" (Mk. 14:51-52 only), and each of those into a half-dozen or so smaller units (e.g., "The Arrival of Judas"). After a bibliography for the entire arrest scene, each subunit is treated as it is represented in each Gospel under "Comment." Finally, there is an "Analysis" that covers the entire episode of the arrest in all four Gospels. The "Comment" is exactly that, commentary intended to illuminate the meaning of the text as it stands. The "Analysis" is devoted to matters of composition, tradition history, and historical fact.

The passion narratives as a whole are divided into four "Acts" ("Jesus Prays and Is Arrested . . ."; "Jesus before the Jewish Authorities"; "Jesus before Pilate, the Roman Governor"; "Jesus Is Crucified and Dies . . ."), and each of the acts, except Jesus before Pilate (a single unit), is divided into two "Scenes." Brown has elected to begin the commentary on the passion narratives at the point where all four Gospels begin to run parallel, namely, at the arrest, preceded of course in the Synoptics by the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane (Mark and Matthew). He emphasizes at the outset that his primary aim is "to explain in detail what the evangelists intended and conveyed to their audiences by the narratives of the passion and death of Jesus" (p. 4). Nevertheless,

Brown is very much interested in the origin and the development of traditions that the evangelists incorporated into their accounts. Readers who open Brown's books with tradition-critical or historical interests in mind will not often be disappointed. Yet Brown admonishes the reader not to be obsessed with historical issues and has organized his work so that historical questions cannot be pursued apart from exegetical analysis.

As to sources, Brown believes that a pre-Markan passion narrative existed, although he does not attempt to reconstruct it in detail. The existence of such a source is strongly supported by the probability, for Brown verging upon certainty, that John's account of the passion was not based on, or developed from, Mark's. Like earlier exegetes such as Gardner-Smith, Dodd, Bultmann, and Schnackenburg, he does not find the hypothesis that John used Mark useful for explaining the Johannine passion narrative. More likely, John drew upon an independent, but related, source or traditions. It is not, however, necessary to posit the existence of other continuous pre-Gospel passion narratives to explain the distinctive material of Matthew, or even Luke. The continued flourishing and growth of the popular tradition with which Matthew embellishes his passion narrative is illustrated in the Gospel of Peter, whose author also seems to have known—perhaps at some distance—the canonical Gospels.

In fact, it belongs to the very nature of Christian Gospels to rest upon oral tradition: "Can one seriously believe that Matt and Luke knew nothing of a passion before they read Mark, and that what they already knew was not blended (perhaps unconsciously) with what they read?" Brown continues with a statement that to my mind is as clearly correct as it is obvious: "Sealing off the evangelists by confining them to written dependence contradicts the ethos from which the Gospel material came to them: from a Jesus whose message was oral and who never recorded a word in writing, and from decades of preaching about Jesus which gave rise to bodies of Jesus traditions" (p. 45).

Brown pursues exegetical and historical questions with characteristic intensity and comprehensiveness. For example, he devotes ten pages to the textually dubious "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (pp. 971–81). He seriously engages such questions as the physiological cause of Jesus' death (pp. 1088–92), the character and the placement of the inscription on the cross (pp. 962–68), and which veil of the temple was rent (pp. 1109–13). The episode of the piercing of Jesus' side (Jn. 19:31–37) gets more than fifteen pages of discussion. There are extensive treatments of the Jewish trial and the Roman trial. In the latter case, Brown patiently explains that there are not, and probably never were, official Roman records of Jesus'

trial. There are all sorts of useful tables and charts, including one displaying the different women named as being at the crucifixion or the tomb (p. 1016). The work concludes with a printout of each of the four passion narratives with a sidebar indicating on what pages a sentence, or line, is treated. (Pages are conveniently numbered consecutively through the two volumes.) There are nine appendices treating subjects ranging from Judas Iscariot to the scriptural background of the passion narratives. The final appendix, by Marion L. Soards, is an exceedingly useful and usable catalogue of the views of a wide range of scholars, most of whom accept a pre-Markan passion narrative. Soards has arranged an extensive chart showing how each scholar disposes of every verse of the Markan text.

Obviously no one will agree with every conclusion Brown reaches. Probably his courageous effort to tackle the question of responsibility or guilt for Jesus' death (pp. 383-97), particularly the nature and extent of Jewish involvement, will be a point of disagreement and controversy, as he himself anticipates (p. 386). On p. 391 Brown writes: "For different reasons some Christians and Jews have argued that one can settle the question of Jewish involvement by allowing that a few priests and nobles conspired to have Jesus put to death. Beyond that Jesus' death had nothing to do with Judaism." Brown does not specify whom he has in mind. Then on p. 395 he writes: "In such a context of hostile interJewish feelings, how can one dismiss as unthinkable a desire on the part of some fellow Jews for severe action against Jesus, a troubling religious figure, and eventually against those in Judaism who came to accept him?" These statements reflect Brown's own involvement in a scholarly discussion that is deemed by many to be of enormous contemporary religious significance. They also reveal his own unwillingness to allow such religious and interfaith interests to becloud historical judgment.

Perhaps that is why he here posits extreme positions ("Jesus' death had nothing to do with Judaism"; severe action "on the part of some fellow Jews . . . against Jesus" is unthinkable), which few contemporary scholars would any longer hold. Exactly what Jesus' death had to do with Judaism is a question that allows for, indeed requires, much fuller discussion than one is able to give it within the framework of a strictly New Testament study. Such a discussion would have to concern itself with how early Christians and ancient Jews came to define themselves, a process that is under way, but, as Brown well knows, not complete within the period when the Gospels were composed. Did the Jews as a people crucify Jesus? Certainly not. Were significant Jewish leaders involved in the death of Jesus? Probably so. Did some of them

conspire in advance to have him put out of the way by the Romans? Quite possibly. I think these questions and answers accurately represent Brown and set the parameters within which scholarly discussion will go on.

Most people who buy this lengthy work will not read it from cover to cover, whether over a long period or short. Rather, it will serve them as an invaluable resource. It does not replace study of the passion narratives, but invites such study. It will doubtless serve as a basic text for seminars on the passion narratives or the death of Jesus, and every informed reader will stand in awe of the work and accomplishment that *The Death of the Messiah* represents.

D. Moody Smith
Duke University

Keck, Leander E., et al., eds. *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Vol. 1. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994. Pp. xx + 1195. \$65.00.

This first volume of *The New Interpreter's Bible* contains a large collection of introductory articles by twenty-two scholars and commentaries with brief introductions on Genesis by Terence Fretheim, on Exodus by Walter Brueggemann, and on Leviticus by Walter Kaiser. While the three commentators are all white males, they differ in theological perspective and methodological presuppositions, and the larger collection of scholars represents an even wider spectrum, including ethnic and gender diversity. Nevertheless, despite this diversity and despite the sharp debate between Brueggemann and Fretheim over the exegetical legitimacy of reading Exodus as a liberationist document, there is a certain underlying unity to the whole volume.

The volume is focused on the contemporary relevancy of the biblical texts in the community of faith, and it assumes that the whole range of new approaches to reading the texts has a contribution to make to this end. It presupposes that attention should be centered almost exclusively on the final form of the text as a compositional unity, and hence there is an underlying hostility toward the older historical-critical approach. There is a general disparagement of the exegetical value of previous generations' concern for issues of source analysis and questions of history.

The introductory articles are arranged under four headings: I. "Introduction to The New Interpreter's Bible"; II. "How We Got Our Bible" (two articles); III. "How the Bible is Read, Interpreted, and Used" (thirteen articles); and IV. "The Background of the Old Testament Texts" (seven articles). The articles under the headings I, II, and IV are relatively tradi-

tional, though there is a general tendency to push rather controversial contemporary opinions that are far from achieving any consensus, for example, the late dating of the pentateuchal source J. The articles under heading III cover the whole range of modern approaches to reading the Bible, with a heavy emphasis on the social location of the reader. Five articles begin with "Reading the Bible as . . ." and continue with (1) "... African Americans"; (2) "... Asian Americans"; (3) "... Hispanic Americans"; (4) "... Native Americans"; and (5) "... Women." One might excuse the reader who, after studying these, decided that reading the Bible was pointless. None of them gives any indication that the biblical text might speak an independent word capable of challenging one's prior ideology or reframing one's conceptual world.

The format of the actual commentaries differs from that followed by the earlier *Interpreter's Bible* in several respects. In this new work each section of scripture to be treated is introduced by a heading that gives a scripture citation, followed by a descriptive title. Then the NIV and NRSV translations of that passage are printed in parallel columns and marked off as text by a light green background. This is a departure in both layout and content from the earlier work, which printed the RSV and KJV in parallel columns at the top of the page, marking it off from the exegesis on the same page by a simple dividing line. Following the parallel translations of the biblical text, *The New Interpreter's Bible* introduces the exegetical section with the heading "Commentary," and it concludes this treatment with a section entitled "Reflections." Both these sections are done by the same scholar so that the reflections on the contemporary relevance of the text grow out of the preceding commentary. This is a major improvement over the earlier *Interpreter's Bible*, which often assigned the "exegesis" and "exposition" of the same book to different authors with the unfortunate result that the exposition seldom grew out of the exegesis and too often stood in stark contradiction to it. Each of the three commentaries in this volume is quite suggestive in its own ways in raising questions about the contemporary relevance of the biblical text, but with the possible exception of Fretheim's work on Genesis none is particularly helpful for readers who come to the text with linguistic, literary, historical, or sociological questions.

J. J. M. Roberts
Princeton Theological Seminary

Rashkow, Ilona N. *The Phallacy of Genesis: A Feminist-Psychoanalytic Approach*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp. 144. \$14.99.

Rashkow's book is, by its own characterization, an "idiosyncratic" interpretation of several episodes and passages in Hebrew Bible narrative, mostly the traditionally labeled "patriarchal narratives" in Genesis. Stressing that both literary texts and their readers are laden with ideological and personal concerns, Rashkow performs a feminist critique of the Bible and its conventional understanding, employing hermeneutical techniques derived from notions of psychoanalysis, intertextuality, and deconstruction. In her deliberately subversive readings, Abraham in Egypt passed his wife Sarah off as his sister for the purpose of acquiring wealth (Genesis 12); the foreign ruler Abimelech—in contrast to Abraham—"did nothing wrong" and suffered guilt pangs about taking Sarah (Genesis 20); Genesis condones incest between father and daughter (Genesis 2–3 [*sic!*] and 19); and female sexuality produces anxiety for the biblical covenant, which is conceived as a male (deity)-male (community) relationship.

Rashkow's writing is lucid and lively (one chapter is entitled "Oedipus, Shmoedipus, I Love My Mom!"), and the use of subsections and cross-references further facilitates reading.

Representing a distinctly postmodern reading of the Bible, Rashkow displays a number of postmodernism's salient features. Perhaps foremost among these is its questioning of the conventional grounds of knowing and its attentiveness to how meaning is being made. Rashkow characteristically challenges traditional interpretations and explains something of the theories she will assume in reading differently.

Over the past decade the field of biblical studies has welcomed—or at the very least become accustomed to—innovative approaches drawn from the social sciences and literary theory. Biblicists grow cynical and intolerant, however, when they find the innovators violating rules of grammar and reading that are fundamental to the discipline and not open to challenge except on their own grounds—linguistics and philology.

Rashkow, who is trained primarily in comparative literature and teaches comparative studies at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, more than occasionally tests the limits of philological tolerance. She asserts, for example, that Hebrew *reḥayim*, "handmill," is "the dual form of *reḥem* ('uterus')" (p. 107), when every Hebrew beginner knows that the *mem* in the former word is part of the dual suffix and not part of the root, as it is in the latter word. Rashkow, who reads "the Hebrew Bible as a single literary work"

(p. 110) and routinely engages in intertextuality, claims that nowhere in the Bible is the incest between Lot and his daughters condemned (p. 84). One would do well to consult Deut. 23:4, whose prohibition of Moabites and Ammonites in the Israelite community is most readily explained by their incestuous origins in Genesis 19.

In psychoanalyzing the text of Abimelech's dream in Genesis 20, Rashkow insists that "the *actual* dream" consists only of what God says to Abimelech in verse 3 (p. 51). The text as conventionally read makes Rashkow's interpretation impossible since verse 6 states explicitly that God responded to Abimelech "in the dream," and verse 8 provides a formal conclusion to the dream report, stating that Abimelech awoke in the morning. It is problematic enough to psychoanalyze a literary dream as though it were an "actual" one; but if an interpreter's method violates the commonly accepted rules of reading and must override universally accepted textual signals, that method will severely limit participation in its world of discourse.

Another hallmark of postmodernism is its openness to diverse discourses, its awareness of other voices. It therefore strikes me as ironic that Rashkow gives little recognition to others who have taken the path of psychoanalytic biblical interpretation before. There is no reference, for example, to the several works of Dorothy Zelig, such as her 1974 book *Psychoanalysis and the Bible: A Study in Depth of Seven Leaders*, or to Ernst Wellisch's *Isaac and Oedipus* (1954).

One would have expected that the editors of the Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation series in which *The Phallacy of Genesis* appears, Bible scholars Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, would have found and corrected the many errors of omission and commission that detract from Rashkow's creative effort. Innovative work, no less than traditional work, needs to be properly informed.

Edward L. Greenstein
The Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Caird, George B., and Lincoln D. Hurst. *New Testament Theology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. Pp. xix + 498. \$24.95.

At the time of his sudden death in 1984 George B. Caird, Dean Ireland's Professor of Exegesis of Holy Scripture in the University of Oxford, had completed the first draft of nearly half of the present book. Happily this material was placed eventually into the hands of one of his former D. Phil. students, Lincoln D. Hurst, a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary

(M.Div. and Th.M.) and now Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California, Davis. Much of the material in the second half of the book has been carefully constructed from Caird's published and unpublished papers made available to Hurst as Caird's literary executor. By the dint of hard work and a keen sensitivity to the thought of his mentor, Hurst has provided an altogether worthy supplement that fills out the scope of Caird's intended treatment of New Testament theology.

Over the years New Testament theology has been set forth in a variety of formats. Some writers have followed a chronological approach, tracing the growth of Christian ideas from Jewish and/or Graeco-Oriental thought through various stages now reflected in the New Testament. Others have sought to identify the core of apostolic theology and to relate everything to that core. Still others have followed an author-by-author approach. Dissatisfied with these procedures, Caird takes the unique step of setting up an imaginary apostolic council among the various authors of the New Testament. Central concepts, such as predestination, sin, atonement, the church, sacrament, ethics, eschatology, and Christology, are discussed as though at a conference table by such figures as Luke, Paul, John, the author of Hebrews, and others. The book then moves to a climax with a presentation of the theology of Jesus himself.

In less skillful hands, such a procedure could have become wooden and doctrinaire, a mere hodgepodge. Actually, however, Caird and Hurst provide a penetrating and lucid guide through and around many questions and problems posed by modern biblical study. There is no padding here, but the reader finds crisp and insightful summaries. As examples, consider the following: "There is in the New Testament only one unforgivable sin—to put oneself beyond the reach of God's forgiveness. But this may be done in several ways: by an unforgiving attitude to others, by a denial of the Incarnation, by blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and by refusal to listen to the gospel" (p. 116).

Under the heading of atonement we read, "the New Testament writers treat Christ as Saviour because he has borne sin's guilt, removed sin's taint, and broken sin's power" (p. 145).

Can one who is totally good truly be tempted as are others? To this question the Synoptic Gospels supply an answer: *yes, and more so*. Here the idea is that one who resists a temptation understands its strength more than one who submits during the first assault. . . .

Each of the temptations is portrayed as aiming not at a point of weakness but at the reservoir of Jesus' power—his compassion, his commitment, his faith. (pp. 295–96)

Whereas Pharisees “saw in scripture only divine Law, Jesus looked deeper and discovered a divine purpose, to which a more radical obedience was due than any law could elicit, and in the light of which all other interpretations of scripture must be judged” (p. 305).

From these four examples the reader can perceive that this book encapsulates fresh and illuminating discussions of leading ideas at the heart of Christianity. Throughout its chapters, the authors also offer explicit and forthright criticism of a variety of contrary opinions, ancient and modern. The result is a weighty volume whose pages instruct as well as stimulate the reader. In brief, this is vintage Caird, made available and supplemented by one of his more accomplished students.

Bruce M. Metzger
Princeton Theological Seminary

Jewett, Robert. *Paul the Apostle to America: Cultural Trends and Pauline Scholarship*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994. Pp. xi + 178. \$16.99.

This book, by Robert Jewett, Professor of New Testament at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, is another exploration in his ongoing dialogue between biblical affirmations and contemporary culture in the United States. Jewett argues that the traditional interpretation of Paul has been impressed upon the American mind by European perspectives. He portrays the “European” Paul as a combative, aristocratically hierarchical “great man,” who does not imagine that his lofty principles could become actual in the present.

Jewett considers this image of the Apostle a distorted one and proposes replacing that with an “American” Paul that is both more accurate to the real Paul and at the same time more able to speak to sensitivities and needs in our contemporary culture. The book is divided into two parts.

Part one, “Pauline Scholarship Interacting with Cultural Trends,” in effect deals with the pairs in the baptismal formula in Gal. 3:28. Here the author collects recent scholarship (including his own) about Jew/Christian, male/female, and slave/free. He argues that Paul was accepting of the authenticity of Judaism, affirmative of the equality of male and female, and supportive of

the liberation of Onesimus through what Jewett calls a "tactful revolution of the new age of grace" (p. 69).

Part two, "New Pauline Resources for the American Future," contains the author's recent and original explorations of what Paul's message might be to contemporary problems. Here he deals with the failure of egalitarianism in communities, consumerism, the closing of the American mind (Paul is a better guide than Bloom and Plato), and political zealotism, of which the posture of, and the popular response to, Oliver North provide the key example.

There is much in this volume to provoke disturbing reflections, as the author intends. Readers may be challenged by different topics. For me, especially after the 1994 national elections, the analysis of American political zealotism is particularly chilling. Jewett argues that Paul's critique of zealotism without understanding (see Rom. 10:2) provides a scathing indictment of much in the current political atmosphere.

At least three questions about the general claims of the author can be raised. The first concerns Jewett's new image of the Apostle. Is the American Paul more accurate a picture of what Paul really stood for than the European, or is it a creation based on what Jewett feels we *need*? Jewett clearly believes that it is more accurate and supports his interpretation with insightful exegesis. There is no doubt that one's social location provides insights into a text that may not have been seen before. It is also the case that the temptation to read into a text what one wants it to say is always a danger.

The second question concerns whether the credit for this new Paul can so completely be given to American (that is, North American) scholarship. Certainly it is the case that American scholars have significantly contributed. One finds, however, that there are American scholars who still work with a "European" Paul, while there are European scholars who are sympathetic to the Paul that Jewett portrays. Indeed, some of the important figures that Jewett leans upon, while teaching in the United States, are European born and European trained. In the final analysis, the location of the scholars is not as important as the image itself.

The third issue is the troubling one. Is the American Paul compatible with American values—is he an apostle Americans want to listen to—or is he a prophet who thunders against its values? The answer Jewett implies is an ambivalent one. Yes, there are many in our society who rejoice to hear about an egalitarian Paul (but not all do). The American Paul is, however, surely prophet, not priest to issues of consumerism and political zealotism. I suspect the American—at least Jewett's—Paul is one whose function is to

confront destructive dimensions widespread in American culture. Jewett may find the American Paul more desirable than the European; I am not sure this goes for Americans in general.

To sum up: The book is insightful, provocative, and at best disturbing. Here is scholarship that serves contemporary reflection and suggests how Christians can use Paul to struggle with social life in our troubled times. One may argue about whether Paul is an American Paul; it is hard to disagree that Robert Jewett is a true prophet for American culture.

Robin Scroggs
Union Theological Seminary

Talbert, Charles H. *The Apocalypse: A Reading of the Revelation of John*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994. Pp. ix + 123. \$12.99.

In this brief volume, Charles H. Talbert furnishes pastors and teachers with a vision-by-vision commentary designed to diminish both the disuse of the Apocalypse in mainline churches and its abuse in marginalized sects (p. ix). Because the prophet relied on symbolic language, Talbert believes that the meaning of each symbol derives from the vast reservoir of apocalyptic literature. He therefore provides numerous parallels from that literature that enable him to translate the symbolic narrative theology of the prophet into the more prosaic language of the street and the classroom. Highly complex visions thus yield two calls to early Christian readers: a call to repentance in the case of those who were "assimilating to Roman imperial culture," and a call to endurance in the case of those suffering because of their resistance to such assimilation (p. 110). Because this treatment of John's visions is more or less standard among historians today, my criticisms will apply to more than this single book.

Inevitably, hermeneutical flaws appear whenever exegetes turn narrative theology into social policy and whenever they turn the visions of a prophet "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" into univocal moral injunctions. To reduce a heavenly symbol to an earthly equivalent drastically reduces its range of reference. When, for example, John's Babylon becomes simply another word for Rome, its reference in space and time is severely restricted. As a reality in heaven, Babylon embraces many spiritual and earthly kingdoms in many different periods and places. In John's vision, Jerusalem as the place where the Lord was crucified is equivalent to Sodom, to Egypt, to the place where two witnesses are killed, and, by implication, to Patmos itself (11:7-13). To explain each symbol by reference to a single use makes one wonder why the

symbol was used in the first place. Visions may be used, to be sure, to establish "social control" or to legitimate the prophet's authority (pp. 39, 44), but there are other, more important functions, such as clarifying the ultimate sources of the conflict between the churches in Asia and "the synagogue of Satan."

Behind those hermeneutical deficiencies lurk serious ontological difficulties. When apocalyptic symbols are translated too easily into contemporary social conflicts, the very translation accords primacy to earthly forces, and the heavens are treated as reality of a secondary order. That utterly destroys the prophet's world, for to him God is the source, sustenance, and end of all creation. To him, behind Babylon is the earth beast, the sea beast, the dragon, who is none other than "the ancient serpent" (12:9) whose power to deceive began in Eden and who continues that deception until the restoration of the tree of life. In John's world, primacy belongs to God's design, and that is why both the single story, with all its subplots, and the single vision, with its many scenes, embrace all instances of human rebellion and all instances of God's victory "from the foundation of the world." And interpreters should never forget that both the single story and the single vision end in the worship of God (1:6; 22:8-9).

Because of this ontological defect, there is a related soteriological deficiency in this method of reducing the vision to sociological behavior. John's vision of the age-long battles between God and "the ancient serpent" gives central importance to the Lamb "that was slain" as victor in those battles. All the scenes in this overarching vision should be seen as forms of doxologies addressed to this victor. "You were slain and by your blood you ransomed for God saints" (5:9). As firstborn from the dead, Jesus has the keys of Death and Hades. As ruler of the kings of earth, he "made us to be a kingdom" (1:5-6). To give primacy to Rome and the need to resist cultural assimilation is to downplay Jesus' victory in God's battle with Satan and the kingdom already shared by those whom he has freed with his blood. Talbert seems to be content with this view of Jesus' saving act: "Only one who has died rather than sin has the moral authority to set in motion God's will upon the earth" (p. 29). John would hardly be content with so minimal a perception of the Lamb's kingdom, glory, and power. In my judgment, then, this author has used his unquestioned erudition and linguistic skill to defuse the explosive power of the prophet's vision, along with its mystery, majesty, terror, and wisdom. I fear that professional historians today are disqualified, by both training and practice, from doing full justice to the stories and visions of the prophet John.

Paul S. Minear
Yale Divinity School

Jung, Patricia Beattie, and Ralph F. Smith. *Heterosexism: An Ethical Challenge*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993. Pp. 234. \$59.50/\$19.95.

Pronk, Pim. *Against Nature? Types of Moral Argumentation Regarding Homosexuality*. Translated by John Vriend. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993. Pp. xxi + 350. \$24.99.

Among the modest flood of books currently appearing on homosexuality, only a few focus on theological and ethical matters. Among these, only some make significant contributions. These are two of the more important volumes.

The first, by Jung and Smith, began as an attempt to treat homosexuality particularly in Lutheran debates. She, a Roman Catholic, teaches at Wartburg Theological Seminary, and he, a Lutheran, did so also until his recent, untimely death. They intended to write a teaching volume for the churches, one in which they would propose a more tolerant attitude and advocate a stronger position against the homophobia that can both inhibit discussion and become so destructive of persons.

In the course of the research for and writing of this volume, as the authors early announce, they became convinced that the real problem is less intolerance and homophobia than the normativity of "heterosexism" in the Christian tradition. They define heterosexism as "a reasoned system of bias regarding sexual orientation." By "reasoned system" they do not concede that it is justifiable but only that it is "not grounded primarily in emotional fears, hatreds or other visceral responses. . . . Instead, it is rooted in a largely cognitive constellation of beliefs about human sexuality."

This focus of the book makes it useful on three counts. First, it seeks to make theological, ethical, and scientific arguments the topic of discussion in a way that does not make everyone who disagrees with current developments presumptively guilty of moral bigotry or pathological irrationality. It does not always succeed in this effort, but it is a gain over many other texts that presume that any disagreement with an advocacy position is because one is hateful, fearful of change, or plagued by unresolved anxieties of one kind or another.

Second, the volume displays the kind of argument that the churches clearly confront from many quarters. The question is not, for many, the issue of homosexuality at all but the issue of whether the classical understandings of the biblical sources and of the moral tradition have any normative weight or whether they are the source of oppression. If they are the source of oppression, then those who hold to "traditional Christian values" are seen as the

problem. Jung and Smith argue that defenders of these values must make a better case for them than has been given to this point.

Third, this book provides a handy compendium of the arguments often used in Protestant debates today about the "real" meanings of key scriptural passages as understood by modern biblical scholarship, particularly as it takes into account contemporary human experience (as interpreted through at least some schools of social science). The Protestant, and especially evangelical, accent on the self-authenticating character of personal experience comes to the fore here. Many vignettes appear about the pain people feel, raising the question as to why people simply cannot be accepting and stop hurting others.

Throughout, the key and quite decisive issue is posed rather effectively: Is it so that the Christian tradition is, has been, and, above all, ought to be heterosexist in its understanding of human life? Is it or should it be, in any biblical, theological, scientific, or ethical sense, biased toward heterosexual life?

The authors are convinced that it has been, and that it is so still but ought not be. Indeed, that which is the real sin of our day is heterosexism, against the witness of scripture that tells us to love our neighbors. In this regard, Jung and Smith see the liberation of society from that sin as the basic goal, a goal involving an unleashing of "the erotic" so that it may become a path to the holy. Parts of the argument are not convincing. For instance, there is no clear or careful definition of what the desired holiness might be and how one would know it if one saw it. The book is, nevertheless, useful for assaying much that is present in current American debates.

Against Nature? however, takes the arguments to another level of depth. Pim Pronk, a professor at the Hogeschool Holland, an affiliate of the Vrije Universiteit, joins the issues in a deeper and broader way. Not only does he set forth the basic arguments that have been developed over the last century on this question in the permissive cultures of Holland and Scandinavia, he takes up arguments from elsewhere on the continent, England, and America. Further, he traces their theological and philosophical sources and inquires about presuppositions and implications.

The central claim of this volume is that nearly all of the basic positions taken today depend on the naturalist fallacy. Even the views of those who oppose natural theology, such as Karl Barth, are shown to be naturalistic in character. So also are many arguments of gay advocates (with whom Pronk largely identifies) and those pleading for tolerance (some of whom he sharply criticizes). Both tend to de-moralize and often thereby dehumanize homosexual persons by claiming that it is their nature to be that way, and there is,

therefore, nothing they can do about it. Both arguments become deterministic in their view of what drives gay behavior, whether their assessment is positive ("This is *my* nature!"), negative ("That contradicts all that is natural!"), or exonerating ("I know you can't help yourself!").

Pronk shows how the notion of "nature" is itself confused in modern debates (as we can also see in today's confused views of the relation of theology and ethics to science and technology, development and ecology). In regard to sexuality, we are not clear what the opposite is. Is it diseased, distorted, imperfect, unusual, artificial, superficial, cultural, unnecessary, or what?

And how does the appeal to what is natural relate to what ought to be the case? Many things exist in states of nature that we deplore or wish would be otherwise. Pronk knows that it is a distinct, and mistaken, move to jump from a descriptive statement of the way things "naturally are" to a prescriptive statement about the way things "ought to be," positively or negatively, without an intervening (ethical? religious?) step.

The importance of Pronk's study is that its author knows that the Protestant tradition generally has broken with the theory of natural law, but it does not know what to do with nature, with the naturalistic references in scripture, or with the changing concepts of nature as they appear in medicine and science. How are they to be woven into the moral wisdom of Christian teaching in this area? Many past combinations have now proved inadequate; will the current findings from the social and cultural sciences themselves also soon be displaced? What on earth is natural?

The problem is present in certain ways of understanding Lutheran doctrines about the "orders of creation," in some post-Protestant teachings where nature and creation are so identified that God becomes the becoming of an evolutionary process of history, and in certain "creational" neo-Calvinist traditions. But it is equally acute in those views of God's freedom that have no discernable relationship to any structure in the biophysical universe and thus can be applied at will to any preference.

Similarly, Pronk knows that the theological tradition itself has not satisfactorily settled the question of which parts of scripture have preference over which other parts, which ones are pertinent to the whole of humanity, which to the church only, which to ancient contexts, which to now, and which to all times.

The ethics of human sexuality, therefore, cannot be settled by an appeal either to nature or to scripture, in the view of this author, and must be dealt with strictly on the grounds of those modes of moral discourse that are

worked out in the context of the formation and maintenance of human relationships, quite within the confines of practical reason.

Ironically, thus, Pronk defends homosexuality on Kantian grounds—not the Kant of the categoricals or even the Kant who wrote condemningly about same-sex relations but the Kant who gave rise to the distinctions between practical, pure, and religious reason. Pronk wants the issue to be seen as a practical matter only, one that thereby sees the homosexual person as a moral agent and equal partner in the practical debate.

His methodological move here has important consequences for the future. Is it so that we can draw such sharp lines between these modes of reasoning, or do they overlap and intersect when we come to issues of evaluation, as Kant himself seems to suggest in his writings on judgment and on law? Must we leave the findings of the scientists and the systematic reflections of theologians out of these debates? I am not convinced.

I think that the multiple analytic distinctions that Kant makes and that serve as a model for the way Pronk works on this problem can help us sort key issues. But uncorrected, it can lead entirely to a deconstruction of the moral fabric of personal and civilizational life. It is better, even necessary, I think, to clarify the parts that need, in thought and in life, to be reconstructed into models of the whole—with, ultimately, theological guidelines and biophysical probabilities included in the mix. They will be, and they should be, influential in public discourse—within and beyond the church.

But whether my view or Pronk's is accurate, and whether my reading of Pronk is valid or not, it is clear that he has moved the debates to a new level. As the volume by Jung and Smith tells us where much of the discussion is today, it is doubtful that any theologian, pastor, Christian ethicist, or moral philosopher will be able to address this issue creatively in the near future without digesting, struggling with, and finally surpassing the issues and the perspectives posed by Pronk.

Max L. Stackhouse
Princeton Theological Seminary

Noll, Mark A. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994. Pp. ix + 274. \$19.99.

In this prophetic indictment of modern evangelical Christianity Mark Noll calls for a reassessing of evangelical priorities. His thesis is that the evangelical movement is betraying its Reformation and Puritan heritage by fostering

anti-intellectualism and individualism. He ably shows how the scientific methodology spawned by the Enlightenment has infiltrated evangelical thought and practice and has resulted in both biblical obscurantism (seeking a scientific facade for biblical claims) and evangelical rationalism (an uncritical faith in induction as the way to discover biblical truth). Noll further critiques the modern evangelical movement for its often pointless activism, docetism, and gnosticism. By turning people's attention away from the critical issues that shape the culture toward the pursuit of interior peace and personal happiness, evangelicals have fostered a privatistic spirituality. While acknowledging the indisputable role of evangelicals in many of the great social movements of the past, such as abolition and prohibition, Noll points to the erosion of evangelical influence in the centers of higher learning and the dearth of in-depth theological journals in the evangelical community that strive to meet the challenges posed by the philosophical and cultural movements of the age. Evangelicals continue to be involved politically, but their involvement often reveals an unwitting accommodation to cultural expectations and the lack of theological underpinning.

When Noll uses the category "evangelical" he mainly has in mind the synthesis of American and Protestant values in the nineteenth century filtered through the "trauma of fundamentalist-modernist strife." While he recognizes certain movements within the evangelical orbit whose history is somewhat different, such as the Dutch Reformed and the Mennonites, he tends to truncate the scope of evangelical religion in his overall treatment. It would have been helpful if the author had given a brief analysis of those movements and denominations coming out of German Pietism, such as the Evangelical Synod of North America (which produced the Niebuhr brothers), the Evangelical United Brethren, and the Church of the Brethren. The German Reformed Church could also have been included in the discussion, since one of its foremost theologians, Philip Schaff, played a leading role in the American Evangelical Alliance in the nineteenth century. The author might also have said something about the evangelical renewal movements within the mainline denominations and scholars within these denominations who identify with this renewal (some of whom are mentioned in another context).

Noll is particularly cogent in his critiques of dispensationalism and scientific creationism. He rightly points to the deleterious effects of these movements on serious, creative scholarship. He also might have examined the role of ideology in evangelicalism. Many of those who grow up in fundamentalism and then rebel against it seem to be particularly vulnerable to ideological intrusion from feminism and social liberationism. One reason for this may be

that far too many evangelicals are insufficiently anchored in the tradition of the church universal to discriminate effectively between the eternally abiding and the culturally transitory. When the focus is on complex social issues, a direct appeal to the Bible apart from the history of theological interpretation in the church is almost always inadequate, since the biblical narrative by itself does not provide the necessary intellectual resources to cope with the crisis of the age. Evangelicals like Noll who see the need for philosophical and cultural tools in the church's apologetic nevertheless continue to affirm the Bible as the foundation and criterion for faith and practice, thus confirming their fidelity to the Protestant Reformation.

The author makes a compelling case that while the evangelical movement is still a vital source for personal and spiritual renewal, it has relatively little impact on the wider culture, particularly in the centers of higher education and the arts. What is needed is a new kind of evangelism that strives to win not simply the souls of lost individuals but the mind of the culture.

Donald G. Bloesch
University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

Hart, D. G. *Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of Conservative Protestantism in Modern America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994. Pp. xi + 227. \$35.00.

A professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, primarily in New Testament, from 1906 to 1929, J. Gresham Machen is best known for his scholarly defense of conservative Presbyterian theology, his attack on theological modernism, his opposition to the reorganization of the Seminary completed in 1929, his expulsion from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (PCUSA), and his role in establishing the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1936. Machen is usually portrayed as a brilliant but bullheaded academician, as an overly zealous, pugnacious, cantankerous schismatic who refused to tolerate theological diversity and as a result disrupted the peace and unity of his own denomination. In this thoroughly documented, cogently argued, and masterfully written book, Hart provides a more balanced and nuanced interpretation of Machen's personality, convictions, goals, and achievements. Hart, who directs the library and teaches church history at Westminster Theological Seminary, an institution Machen founded in 1929, seeks to explain the "apparent anomalies" in the career of Machen, locate his life and writings in the broader context of the religious, intellectual, and cultural history of the era, and reassess his critique of both cultural modernism and mainline

Protestantism. More importantly, he uses Machen's career and debates over theology and polity as a vehicle for examining the relationship between conservative Protestantism and American culture during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

His learned defense of Christian orthodoxy, especially the Bible's veracity, his emphasis on soul winning, and his assault on modernists in *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923) and numerous other publications led fundamentalists during the 1920s to consider Machen a champion of their cause, and many recent historians have echoed their conclusion. Hart, however, shows that Machen differed from fundamentalists in many ways—he defended Calvinism, belonged to the Democratic Party, employed the methods of modern biblical scholarship, attacked Prohibition, and refused to oppose the teaching of evolution in public schools. Moreover, he was as critical of fundamentalist efforts to use the power of the church to impose Christian values on American society as he was of the attempt of modernists to adapt Christian faith and practice to suit the “prevailing temper of the age.” Over against the long-standing Protestant conviction that churches should actively work to shape public life, embraced by both fundamentalists and mainstream Protestants in the 1920s and 1930s, Machen argued that the gospel should not be used to achieve broader social and political purposes. The New Testament scholar insisted that the church's quest to create a Christian America undermined its primary tasks of individual evangelism and spiritual nurture; he called instead for a nation based on religious and cultural pluralism.

Hart's book provides many insights into Machen's thought, the nature of fundamentalism in early-twentieth-century America, and the struggle of conservative Protestants with biblical criticism, evolution, new views of history, and cultural modernism. His education and social background as much as his Calvinist convictions, Hart maintains, shaped Machen's conservative worldview and led him to oppose efforts to “modernize” theology. Given Machen's popularity among fundamentalists, his ability to attract only five thousand people to join his new denomination at a time when the PCUSA had nearly two million members, Hart contends, is somewhat of a mystery. He concludes that most fundamentalists rejected Machen's approach because it seemed too Presbyterian and Calvinistic. Hart could have added that a variety of factors kept most conservative Presbyterians, even ones who shared many of Machen's theological views, from affiliating with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church—some of Machen's personal characteristics as well as their pride in the Presbyterian heritage, desires for compromise and church unity, unwillingness to lose their church property and respectability, and belief that

the confessional basis of the denomination was still sound and that the PCUSA could be reformed from within by strengthening local congregations. Hart argues that the Princeton professor significantly influenced the evangelical renaissance that began in the 1940s both by teaching some of its leaders and by setting high standards of scholarship, but it would be helpful if he explained Machen's impact upon the movement more fully. *Defending the Faith* nevertheless is an invaluable resource for understanding Machen's convictions and contributions, the controversies that wracked the PCUSA in the 1920s and 1930s, the conflict between fundamentalism and liberalism, and the rise of modern evangelicalism.

Gary Scott Smith
Grove City College

Anderson, Herbert, and Robert Cotton Fite. *Becoming Married*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press. 1993. Pp. 170. \$9.99.

Becoming Married is the second book of the five-volume series entitled *Family Living in Pastoral Perspective*. The series, organized around the five major movements of family systems (leaving home, becoming married, raising children, recommitting as a couple or promising again, and living alone), offers theological foundations and pastoral-care strategies to pastoral caregivers and to all who are interested in the dynamics of family life. The series is committed to looking at the healthy family and its processes rather than at the problems and pathologies with which many approaches to pastoral care begin.

Herbert Anderson and Cotton Fite, both experts in the care of families, build on the theory of the first book in the series, *Leaving Home* (1993). They persuasively argue that becoming married is set in the context of both "leaving and cleaving." The paradox that one must "leave before they can cleave" is a primary building block in this text. Consequently, the first chapter in the book focuses on how the public declaration of the intention to wed is a key moment in the process of leaving home. The authors discuss the various stages of leaving home that the premarital couple may be in and how to help them in the ongoing differentiation process that will enable them to join to each other.

The second chapter continues to build on these themes but turns to the primary tasks of the premarital-counseling work between the pastor and the couple. This is where the authors draw heavily upon family-systems theory as they suggest that the primary focus of this project needs to be on the families from which these two people come and the implications for the new family

being built. Anderson and Fite propose a system of storytelling, especially through the use of the genogram, to help the couple identify patterns and rules and values carried by their original families that they may or may not want to incorporate into their new family. Identifying those values and patterns for themselves and for each other not only helps the couple be more intentional about the formation of their new family, it also aids the process of differentiation—of leaving home.

The theme of stories is built into the next chapter, which is on planning the wedding itself. There are two particularly helpful contributions in this section—the blending of the family stories with the Christian story and a thoughtful and reflective discussion of the wedding ritual and its elements. Anderson and Fite deal very helpfully with the reality that, for many people, the Christian story has either become diluted or it has lost its meaning altogether. And, yet, there are assumptions and values that the couple often carry that are born out of the Christian story. The authors suggest ways to get at those connections to help the couple become more intentional about both their values and their faith stories. The wedding ritual then becomes a way of blending these stories and bridging the stories into the couple's future. The wedding ceremony is a time of public declaration of the couple's commitments to one another, to the community, and to God, and it is also the time when the witnessing community promises to support and uphold the couple in their promises. The authors offer a number of reflections on how the ceremony liturgy can be helpfully used to facilitate this process.

The fourth chapter looks at ordinary issues in the lives of marrying couples and how these may be complicated by various dynamics. They especially focus on three aspects of becoming married—living with difference, grieving losses, and changing roles. This is a very helpful chapter that builds on the necessary paradoxes and ambiguities of becoming married. Through the use of a variety of stories and illustrations, the reader is invited to explore these ambiguities and to live gracefully with them. The chapter would be improved by a more intentional analysis of a changing culture and by discussion of our growing awareness of the impact that sexism, racism, classism and other interlocking power relationships have on the building of just relationships. The authors certainly acknowledge some of these issues but the analysis is incomplete and minimized. Nonetheless, these discussions about difference and roles are very useful.

The fifth chapter spells out the larger pastoral plan in working with couples who are becoming married. Whereas the premarital work focuses on families of origin and on differentiation, the ongoing plan is to work with newly

married couples for a year or more, helping them look at the kinds of issues they discover in trying to adjust to marriage. The authors explore several dimensions to this work, including couples' groups, mentoring relationships, and educative/counseling work with the pastor. Anderson and Fite argue that couples are much more receptive to relationship issues in the first year after marriage than they are before marriage.

The book ends with a pastoral theology of marriage and the importance of this "covenant of abiding seriousness." The authors offer suggestions for a theology *of* marriage and then a theology *for* marriage. They talk about five themes in the theology for marriage: sacrifice, justice, reconciliation, hospitality, and joy.

This is a very helpful book for pastors who do premarital preparation and for couples who are intending to marry. It is an effective combination of family-systems theory, theological invitation, pastoral strategy, and inspiration for marriage. The book is limited by its organization—it does not speak to gay marriages, to marriages in cultures where couples join extended kin networks in ways that do not fit traditional models of differentiation, or to marriages where the conception of marriage is radically different from traditional marital configurations. Although this book lifts up the changing nature of our culture and the importance of justice and the negotiation of marital roles, it stays very much in the mainstream of traditional family life. Yet, there is a sensitive awareness in this book about the needs and hopes of people that reflects a useful pastoral wisdom. I am glad that this book has been written, and I look forward to using it in my classes on pastoral care.

Christie Cozad Neuger
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

Heyward, Carter. *When Boundaries Betray Us: Beyond Illusions of What Is Ethical in Therapy and Life*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993. Pp. xv + 256. \$17.00.

Carter Heyward, an Episcopal priest who teaches theological ethics at Episcopal Divinity School, has written a controversial book on boundaries and psychotherapy, which has stimulated considerable debate. She was inspired to move out of her own field of study by a personal experience of psychotherapy that was a source of tremendous growth and of devastating pain. The pain, primarily, and her analysis of its source generated this book, which challenges the "patriarchal logic" undergirding the practice of traditional, psychodynamically based psychotherapy. The main point of the book

is that for healing to truly be healing, whether it is in the context of a psychotherapeutic relationship or any kind of relationship, it must be a fully mutual experience. Fundamentally, it is the definition of mutuality or “a genuinely mutual relationship” that is at the core of the controversy about her proposal.

Heyward begins with an extended and detailed autobiographical account of her eighteen months in psychotherapy. During a difficult, burn-out time of her life, Heyward had a very specific set of criteria for her therapist. She wanted her therapist to be lesbian. She wanted a place where she could be herself and relax. She wanted warmth and spontaneity and connection. And, she wanted a relationship that would be mutual—where both therapist and client would be able to grow and learn and change and develop together in the process. She writes, “I also assumed that if the relationship was to be genuinely creative—that is, if it was to be really healing for either of us—it would be so for both of us.” Her assumptions, along with her therapeutic criteria, set up an idealized understanding of what the therapeutic relationship was supposed to be, and, consequently, it ultimately failed. Heyward names her experience as abuse—not abuse because of the absence of boundaries, but abuse because of overly rigid boundaries. Part one of the book details both the hope and the failure of these eighteen months.

Part two continues the autobiography through the next three years of Heyward’s life and names this time period the “Tapestry of Healing.” She suggests that there are five nonpatriarchal images of sacred power that were sources of healing for her: (1) voice, (2) mutuality, (3) connections between all earthcreatures, (4) compassion, and (5) the acceptance of ambiguity. Heyward talks about how these resources in her life helped her to heal from the abuse of psychotherapy and to gain insight about the sacred power of true and mutual relationship.

Part three of the book contains a discussion of ongoing issues by Heyward and a series of articles and letters by friends. The ongoing issues that Heyward names are: (1) relational power and violation, (2) making connections and building community, (3) boundaries and compassion, and (4) shame and liberation. These four sections represent a thoughtful and nonblaming discussion of important dynamics in relationships that have the power to heal. The responses by friends and acquaintances tend to be either articles that frame the issues Heyward has raised in larger theological or psychotherapeutic contexts or letters of support for Heyward’s experience. Two of these, the article by Miriam Greenspan and the one by Peggy Hanley-Hackenbruck, are

especially helpful for consideration by the psychotherapeutic community. The book ends with a lecture that Heyward gave to the American Psychiatric Association about the need for mutuality and spirituality (in the large sense) in psychotherapeutic relationships.

This is a complex book. It is wise and creative. It is also, in my opinion, confused and destructive. In a strange sense, this book suffers because of a lack of clear boundaries. On the one hand, Heyward is attempting to challenge creatively the hierarchical and individualistic orientations of psychodynamic forms of psychotherapy. She does this well in places, although she does not seem to be aware of the massive amount of feminist psychotherapeutic literature that joins her in this critique, or of the number of nonpsychodynamic forms of psychotherapy that do not operate out of a medical model. On the other hand, Heyward attempts to equate the maintenance of appropriate boundaries with a denial of mutuality. Heyward asserts that if a therapeutic relationship is to be really healing, then it must allow for the development in its midst of a friendship between therapist and client. She takes the psychotherapeutic relationship out of the realm of one developed to help the one seeking care and turns it into two people seeking one another equally. Mutuality certainly means openness to learning from one another and an awareness of the deep implications of social location, patriarchal power relationships, and gender training on our tendency to pathologize health and survival skills in marginalized groups. But it does not mean an abandonment of healing knowledge and resources that are carried by the trained therapist for the sake of the one seeking help. I think that Heyward did experience a certain level of abuse in her therapeutic relationship, but it came primarily when the therapeutic boundaries were abandoned or when the messages about those boundaries were contradictory and ambiguous.

As I read Heyward's account of her persistence and insistence that her therapist become open and available (by following Heyward's rules of what mutuality must mean), I experienced a dread of how oppressive any power system can be when imposed on another—even by a client toward a therapist. Heyward's proposals about honesty and openness and the respect of sacred power are crucial critiques for the therapeutic community to understand. Pastoral counselors and psychotherapists need to listen carefully to her thoughtful challenge to hierarchical power arrangements, to individualistic models of development and health, to our tendency to turn difference into pathology, and to defensive distancing by therapists with clients. But I think that Heyward's confusion of that critique with her demand for the therapist to

abandon appropriately healing personal and professional boundaries is destructive and dangerous for all.

Christie Cozad Neuger
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

Eslinger, Richard L., ed. *Intersections: Post-Critical Studies in Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994. Pp. xii + 156. \$12.99.

What does preaching look like if the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation is defunct? This is a question of considerable urgency for a large number of preachers whose primary training in methods of scriptural interpretation came at the hands of biblical scholars steeped in *Formgeschichte*—professors who spent their energies instructing students on how to make an informed stab at the *Sitz im Leben* of a text. In this volume, seven scholars with educational credentials in either homiletics or biblical studies evaluate the waning influence of historical criticism and suggest some of the new directions that preaching theory will take in this “post-critical” time. While certainly not univocal in predicting the final fate of the once comfortable partnership between historical criticism and preaching, the articles in this collection, edited by Richard L. Eslinger, do complement each other, and as a composite they form a helpful and easily readable text.

From a homiletical standpoint, I find the articles by Thomas G. Long and David Buttrick to be the two most engaging chapters in this collection. In “The Preacher and the Beast” Long turns his deft exegetical eye to the subject of apocalyptic literature. He provides a homiletical strategy for preaching apocalyptic texts that steers preachers away from concentrating on historical minutiae (e.g., Does the little horn on the beast in Daniel 7 refer to Antiochus IV?) to consider the performative character of these fantastic texts. Those familiar with Long’s *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* will find this chapter to be a welcome addition to his work on biblical genre and preaching. In “On Doing Homiletics Today” David Buttrick rejoices over the downfall of historical criticism, for its demise signals the arrival of a new homiletic that will take its cues from a social consciousness that is “shaped by religious images and symbols.” According to Buttrick, Karl Barth and the Biblical Theology movement produced an approach to preaching that was merely an irresponsible “transmission of the past.” While Buttrick unfairly ascribes such a stifling homiletical approach to Barth, his final suggestions for the future of preaching remain provocative if not prophetic.

Let me quickly survey the other chapters. Joanna Dewey brings the insights of oral interpretive theory to bear on the Gospel of Mark. Thomas H.

Troeger proposes that preaching attend to postmodern poetics. Richard Eslinger writes appreciatively about narrative homiletics, but also suggests ways in which even that cherished homiletical cow can be improved. Bernard Brandon Scott places the anthropology of Clint Eastwood's *Dirty Harry* movies in conversation with Paul's Epistle to the Romans with intriguing results. David M. Greenhaw challenges preachers to pause in the midst of their love affair with the story in order to reconsider the place of theological concepts in Christian preaching.

So, does this book settle the question? Is historical criticism a bankrupt interpretive method for the contemporary preacher? Clearly, Buttrick and others are eager to sound its death knell. The articles by Long, Scott, and Greenhaw, however, provide a more palatable (and probably accurate) picture of things to come. These authors are critical; for clearly, an overzealous application of historical-critical commentary in the pulpit is a form of homiletical abuse. Yet, these scholars also recognize the continued need for a critical and historical approach to scripture. Can responsible preachers dispense with an attitude of faithful curiosity toward the original context of a biblical passage? I doubt it. As we struggle to speak God's Word to people in *this* age and to interpret the contemporary situation in terms of an eschatological vision of hope, we will continually be confronted by the fact that we are not the first ones to be addressed by this message. *Sitz im Leben*, it seems, has staying power. Consequently, this volume is most persuasive not when it seeks to banish this valuable hermeneutical method from the preacher's study but when it depicts historical criticism as an old exegetical friend whose advice ought to be supplemented by new interpretive voices.

Scott Black Johnston

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Fitchett, George. *Assessing Spiritual Needs: A Guide for Caregivers*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993. Pp. 134. \$9.95.

As George Fitchett states in the preface to this fine, short yet comprehensive volume, this book on spiritual assessment grew out of the "need to clarify the way in which your ministry takes into account and responds to the spiritual dimension of life." One of the strengths of the book is how it is clearly a product of his attempt as chaplain, CPE supervisor, researcher, and interdisciplinary team member to define and integrate spirituality in holistic health care.

The book begins with the challenge for pastoral and other caregivers to be thoughtful and explicit about the kind of spiritual assessment they use, for we

all act on the basis of the information we gather and our interpretations of it, whether our assessment is explicit and disciplined or not. Fitchett's definition of the "spiritual" as "the dimension of life that reflects the need to find meaning in existence and in which we respond to the sacred" forms the base for what he calls a " 7×7 model for spiritual assessment." The model outlines the way spirituality fits into a framework of seven holistic dimensions of assessment: medical, psychological, psychosocial, family systems, ethnic/cultural, societal issues, and spiritual. The spiritual dimension is then broken into seven areas: beliefs and meaning, vocations and consequences, experience and emotion, courage and growth, ritual and practice, community, and authority and guidance.

The description of this very functional model of spiritual assessment in the third chapter is worth the price of the book. It grew out of the work of chaplains with nursing staff at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago to find a model for use by surgical nurses. They also developed guidelines for evaluating models of spiritual assessment, which form the basis for the discussion in the latter chapters of the book. I have found the model very helpful in providing conceptual resources to nonpastoral caregivers who are looking for ways to define and articulate spirituality in patient care. As such, this pastoral product of an interdisciplinary team effort makes a significant contribution to what George Fitchett hopes will be a result of future work in spiritual assessment, that is, the development of a "language of spirituality" that utilizes insights from psychology without giving up the depth and resources of faith traditions.

The other chapters include case studies focusing on three different patients, outlining ways that the model was used to assess and integrate spirituality in their care. Thus, the reader can get a glimpse both of how the model was used in patient care and how the caregivers evaluated their own caregiving and the effectiveness of the model itself. One of the honest statements of the book is the caution that spiritual assessment, like other forms of diagnosis and evaluation, can be much more detailed and elegant than what is actually done in the caregiving or treatment that follows. Or, as I once heard someone say, we are better at treating the chart than the person.

A major significance of the book is the way it contributes to a growing interest in spirituality in a variety of health care settings and disciplines that one might call "secular." Thus, in addition to giving clergy and chaplains tools to define their work in pastoral care, the book has potential application to many others, for example, caregivers interested in holistic approaches to health care, those interested in the ways that spirituality informs ethical

decisions, those concerned about how to respond in an equitable way to the huge diversity of religious and spiritual expression in patient populations where there is no one "normal" faith, those who are seeking ways to mobilize community and congregational support for the care of patients, and, finally, caregivers struggling to find a way to talk about their own spirituality in their personal journeys and professional work. Pastors, chaplains, and teachers, whose ministry is not just to patients and families but also to caregivers who are parishioners, students, and colleagues, will find the book an excellent resource to share and use with them.

William Gaventa
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
Piscataway, NJ

Kelsey, David H. *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993. Pp. viii + 235. \$18.99.

Kelsey, David H. *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological about a Theological School*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992. Pp. 271. \$16.99.

What makes a theological school theological, and, in the same context, how does schooling make claims upon theology? Out of this dialectic come the fundamental issues Kelsey addresses in these two books. By Kelsey's description, they come close to being nonidentical twins, born out of the same gestation period: Kelsey's involvement with the Association of Theological Schools Issues Research Committee. However, unlike twins, their separate identities are clear from the beginning. *Between Athens and Berlin* is based on the constructive thought of others; *To Understand God Truly* is Kelsey's own constructive position. In the first, Kelsey reviews in historical perspective major formative positions current in the literature about theological education. Notably, positions represented by Edward Farley, Joseph Hough and John Cobb, Max Stackhouse, "The Mudflower Collective," and Charles Wood are characterized, criticized, and found to be located somewhere on the road between Athens and Berlin. That is, the road extends from a theological and educational emphasis on the formation of person and community (*paideia*: Athens) to the development of a systematic theological position and professional preparedness for ministry (*Wissenschaft*: Berlin).

Although all positions have elements of both polarities, Farley and "The Mudflower Collective" are closer to Athens; Stackhouse, Hough, and Cobb are closer to Berlin. The exception may be Charles Wood's approach (*Vision*

and *Discernment* [Scholars Press, 1985]), which conceptualizes theological education in "a new key." Emphasizing that the overarching goal is theological *inquiry*, Wood envisions the whole of theological education as differentiated into subareas that, in relation to the whole, shape the relation between theology and schooling. In effect, Wood starts from a vision of the whole and works into the parts in a fashion not evident in other positions. This placing of Wood's conceptualization of theological education may point to "a kind of higher synthesis" in the interplay between Athens and Berlin, says Kelsey.

Generally, this metaphorical urban dichotomy, which fundamentally divides the scene in theological education, brings to focus several other clear-cut distinctions that provide *entré* into the complexities of the dialectical admixture of theology and education.

For Kelsey, thinking metaphorically does not encourage an evasion of tough issues but rather draws them out into sharper focus. Although the dominant issues at stake are similar in both volumes, it is most evident in *To Understand God Truly* that certain ones are fundamental and decisive in Kelsey's own view. Here he confronts three such issues (in their interconnect-edness) that pervade theological schooling. The first is *pluralism*, the second is *unity*, and the third is *concreteness*. Generally, Kelsey's approach is to see pluralism and unity in a dialectic that moves toward the goal "to know God truly." Concreteness, which might be lost to such a teleological resolution, focuses theological education on the congregation, not as a parochial end point, but as the point of reference as Kelsey's thought moves between the concrete particular and the universal. Indeed, the congregation, whose center is worship, is the basis on which Kelsey builds his unique approach to theological education.

His position may be put concisely in his "theological school paradox": It is precisely "by being schooled in a way that is governed by an apparently non-utilitarian [read "useless"] over-arching goal [to understand God simply for the sake of understanding God] that persons can best be prepared to provide church leadership." This marks out an unexpected path between Athens and Berlin. Although this position seems to focus on the formation of persons with a *habitus* that qualifies them as "agents in a shared public world to apprehend God Christianly," it is not speaking strictly about *paideia*. This is the case because the conceptual capacities communicated in the academic life of the school are necessarily to be communicated, but in an "as if" fashion. *Paideia*, closer to the Athenian sense, is more like what occurs in a Christian congregation. Thus, learners in theological schooling aim to cultivate capacities that will enable them to understand Christian congregations as diverse, concrete construals of "the Christian thing" (G. K. Chesterton).

As Kelsey sees it, this nonfoundational, multifaceted, multidisciplinary competence to apprehend God truly for God's own sake avoids contaminating our understandings of theological schooling with conceptual hang-ups, such as the theory/practice split, the clergy/laity split, professionalism, provincialism, and individualism. Conceptually, Kelsey wants throughout his discussion to move from the concrete to the universal as a basically Christomorphic principle and, through several dialectics including those already mentioned, to arrive at a "dialectical tension" between Athens and Berlin for theological schooling.

If this seems utopian, Kelsey means it to be so. However, he approaches utopia not ideologically but quite concretely. Not only does he claim that the actual situation in Christian congregations discloses the potential concreteness and universality in theological schooling, but, further, he intends that his proposal is the kind of utopian position that may well provoke a rethinking of theological education all across the contemporary scene. This may be the case; after all, as Allan D. Bloom put it, "utopianism is, as Plato taught us, the fire with which we must play because it is the only way we can find out who we are" (*The Closing of the American Mind* [Simon & Schuster, 1987], 67).

No one will dispute the very valuable perspectives Kelsey has provided for us in *Between Athens and Berlin*. His summations, characterizations, and critical insights are eminently useful for thinking about theological schooling. However, for all his emphasis on dialectic and his avoidance of foundationalist categories, his constructive proposal in *To Understand God Truly* may not yet be utopian enough. Kelsey's work is coherent, cohesive, and carefully designed to break through a great deal of false consciousness about theological education, and every key term is clearly defined. Yet there is a tacit dimension to these and other works on theological education in this same genre, but it is elusive and not usually voiced or allowed to speak, even though it may be present "indirectly" (the only way we can know God, says Kelsey) throughout the discussion.

A secular analogy may serve to make the point. When Whitehead, in his classic study *The Aims of Education*, writes to justify the university, he says that the university "preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest for life by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning. . . . This excitement which arises from the imaginative consideration transforms knowledge. A fact is no longer a bare fact: it is invested with all its possibilities. It is no longer a burden on the memory; it is energized as the poet of our dreams, and as the architect of our purposes." Here, and elsewhere, the *spirit* of Whitehead's thought does as much to convey the

nature and meaning of the university as do the specific claims about its work and how they designate the loci and substance of that spirit.

There seems to be little indication in the literature on theological education that there is a spirit (albeit different from Whitehead's) at work to "transform knowledge," to put "excitement" into commitment and "zest" or passion into the dialectics that do necessarily inhere in theological education. Precisely to avoid the abuses of spirituality, theological writing on theological education needs to mine the spiritual source and ground of education implicit in Christian theology. In particular, this entire discussion calls for a theology of the Holy Spirit who is, we are told, the one who leads us into all truth and without whom we know nothing "truly."

This is not necessarily to take issue with Kelsey's argument, but it is to say that the theology of the Spirit, tacitly present in his view, needs to be explicated and made an explicit and formative part of the overall dimension of theological education. If we are going to be utopian in order to find out who we are, then the strikingly postmodern potential for a theology of the Spirit ought not to remain tacit but should be invited to speak forth in full voice. This may be to say that theological education would do well to turn from Athens and Berlin toward Jerusalem, the suffering city that gave birth to the church and to the whole "Christian thing" we so earnestly seek through faith to understand.

James E. Loder
Princeton Theological Seminary

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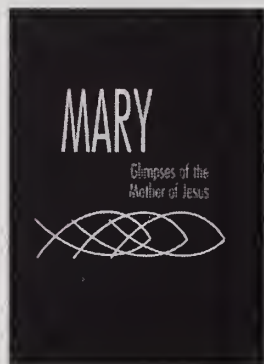
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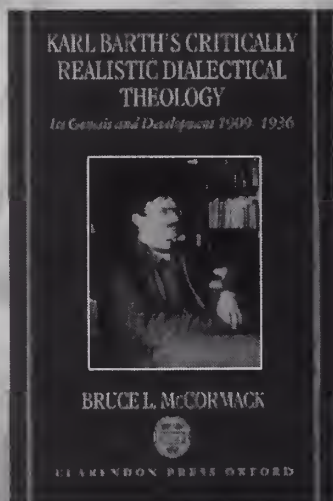
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